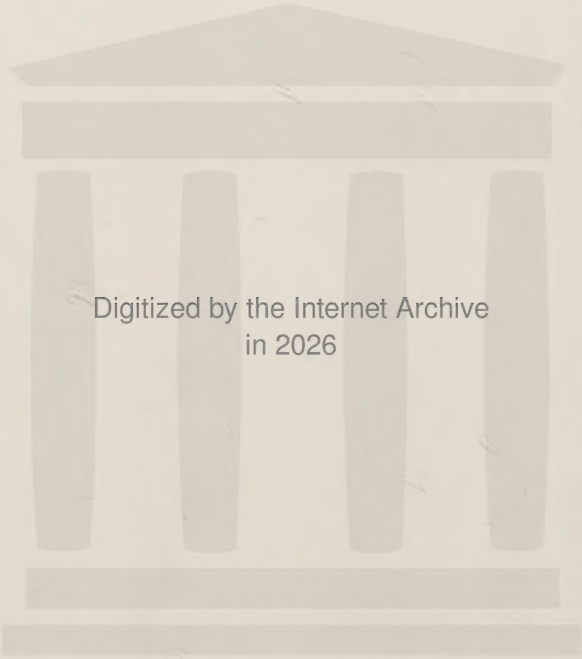

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A

COLLECTION

OF

THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,

IN SIX VOLUMES.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S.
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AND
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CONTENTS.

Eight Charges delivered to the Clergy of the Dioceſes of Oxford and Canterbury. To which are added, *Inſtructions to Candidates for Orders.* By THOMAS SECKER, LL.D. late Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury. *Lond.* 1769. p. 1

The Viſitation Charges which have been publiſhed, at different times, by the Biſhops of the Church of England, relative to the paſtoral duties of the Clergy, are many and good, and theſe by Archbiſhop Secker deſerve as much attention as the beſt of them. *Herbert*'s Country Parſon; *Burnet*'s Paſtoral Care; *Oſtervald*'s Lectures on the Exerciſe of the Sacred Miniſtry; not to ſpeak of *Chryſoſtom* and the other Ancients, who have written on the ſubject, may be very uſefully read by ſerious minded men.

A Treatiſe concerning the Cauſes of the preſent Corruption of Chriſtians, and the Remedies thereof. By J. F. OSTERVALD. Tranſlated into Engliſh by C. MUTEL. 2d Ed. 1702. — — — p. 115

This book was highly eſteemed by Bp. Burnet; and indeed all the writings of Mr. Oſtervald have been very favourably received in the world in general.

The Deſign of Chriſtianity: or, a plain Demonſtration and Improvement of this Propoſition, viz. That the enduing Men with inward real Righteouſneſs, or true Holineſs, was the ultimate End of our Saviour's coming into the World, and is the great Intendment of his bleſſed Goſpel. By ED. FOWLER, D. D. Biſhop of Glouceſter. 3d Ed. *Lond.* 1699. — — — p. 311

This work was firſt publiſhed in 1676: there have been ſeveral editions of it ſince; but not ſo many, as, from the worth of it, might have been expected. *Lucas*' Practical Chriſtianity; *Scott*'s Chriſtian Life; The whole Duty of Man; Holy Living and Dying; and Thomas a Kempis, of the Imitation of Chriſt, are works of a ſimilar tendency. Bp. Burnet, in ſpeaking of ſuch kind of books, very truly ſays, "by the frequent reading of theſe books, by the reliſh that one has in them, by the delight they give, and the effects they produce, a man will plainly perceive whether his ſoul is made for divine matters or not; what ſuitableneſs there is between him and them; and whether he is yet touched with ſuch a ſenſe of religion, as to be capable of dedicating himſelf to it."

Appendix.

THE

CHARGE

OF

THOMAS Lord Biſhop of OXFORD,

TO THE

CLERGY of his DIOCESE,

IN

His PRIMARY VISITATION 1738.

Reverend Brethren,

I AM very ſenſible, that you cannot meet together on this occaſion, without making deep reflexions on the loſs, which you have ſuffered, for the publick good, by the removal of a paſtor, whom the experience of ſo many years hath taught you to eſteem and honour ſo highly. It is your farther unhappineſs, that he is ſucceeded by a perſon, very unequal to the care of this conſpicuous and important dioceſe. But your humanity and your piety will, I doubt not, incline you, both to accept and to aſſiſt the endeavours of one, who can aſſure you, with very great truth, that he is earneſtly deſirous of being as uſeful to you all, as he can; and ſeriouſly concerned for the intereſts of religion, and of this church. Would to God there were leſs need of expreſſing a concern for them, than there is at preſent!

Men have always complained of their own times: and always with too much

much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest, which we feel ourselves; and therefore mistakes are easily made, in comparing one age with another: yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in most others after it. Indeed it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, far from stopping, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at, with very little reserve: and the teachers of it, without any at all. Indeed, with respect to us, the rule, which most of our adversaries appear to have set themselves is, to be, at all adventures, as bitter as they can: and they follow it, not only beyond truth, but beyond probability: asserting the very worst things of us without foundation, and exaggerating every thing without mercy: imputing the faults, and sometimes imaginary faults, of particular persons to the whole order; and then declaiming against us all promiscuously, with such wild vehemence, as, in any case but ours, they themselves would think, in the highest degree, unjust and cruel. Or if sometimes a few exceptions are made, they are usually made only to divide us amongst ourselves; to deceive one part of us, and throw a greater odium upon the other. Still, were these invectives only to affect us personally, dear as our reputations are and ought to be to us, the mischief would be small, in comparison of what it is. But the consequence hath been, as it naturally must, that disregard to us hath greatly increased the disregard to public worship and instruction: that many are grown prejudiced against religion; many more, indifferent about it and unacquainted with it. And the emissaries of the *Romish* church, taking the members of ours at this unhappy disadvantage, have begun to reap great harvests in the field, which hath thus been prepared for them by the labours of those, who would be thought their most irreconcileable enemies.

Yet, however melancholy the view before us appears, we have no reason to be discouraged: for let us take care of our duty, and God will take care of the event. But we have great reason to think seriously, what our duty on this occasion is; and stir up each other to the performance of it: that where-ever the guilt of these things may fall, it may not fall on our heads. *For it must needs be, that offences come: But woe to that man, by whom the offence cometh* (*a*). Our grief for the decay of religion might be attended with much comfort in regard to ourselves, could we but truly say, that no faults or infirmities of ours had ever given advantages against it. But though, God be thanked, we are far from being what our adversaries would represent us; whose reproaches perhaps were never less deserved, than now when they are the most violent: yet, it must be owned, we are not by any means, even the best of us, what

(*a*) Matth. xviii. 7.

what we ought to be. And the preſent ſtate of things calls loudly upon us, to correct our miſtakes, to ſupply our deficiences, and do all we are able for the honour of God, and the happineſs of mankind.

If we can be unconcerned now, we have neither piety nor common prudence in us. And if we are concerned in earneſt, we ſhall be very deſirous, both to avoid all wrong methods of ſhewing it, and to make uſe of all right ones.

Complaining of our ſuperiors for thoſe evils, which perhaps they cannot prevent; or complaining of them with diſreſpect, for what we may apprehend they could prevent, would both be undutiful and imprudent conduct: would give our adverſaries joy, and do our cauſe harm. Indeed to beg earneſtly of God, that he would direct the hearts of thoſe, who preſide over the public welfare; and humbly to repreſent to them, on all fit occaſions, the declining ſtate of religion, the importance and the means of preſerving it; theſe things are unqueſtionable duties. But then we muſt always approve ourſelves, at the ſame time, conſcientiouſly loyal both in word and deed; reaſonable in our expectations; ſincerely grateful for the protection, which we are aſſured of enjoying; and duly ſenſible, that every thing of value to us, in this world, depends on the ſupport of that government, under which we now live. We cannot be good men, if we are bad ſubjects: and we are not wiſe men, if we permit ourſelves to be ſuſpected of it.

A ſecond proper caution is, That to ſpeak unfavourably of liberty, religious or civil, inſtead of carefully diſtinguiſhing both from the many abuſes of them, which we daily ſee; or to encourage any other reſtraints on either, than public utility makes evidently needful; can only ſerve to increaſe that jealouſy, which being in former ages grounded too well, hath been moſt induſtriouſly heightened, when there never was ſo little pretence of ground for it; that the claims of the clergy are hurtful to the rights of mankind. It concerns us greatly to remove ſo dangerous a prejudice againſt us as this: not by renouncing thoſe powers, which the Goſpel hath given us; for we are bound to aſſert them: but by convincing the world, that they are perfectly innocent; and avoiding all appearance of aſſuming what we have no right to: by ſhewing our abhorrence of tyranny, eſpecially over the conſciences of men; and ſatisfying them fully, if poſſible, that *we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus, the Lord; and ourſelves, their ſervants for his ſake* (*b*). Then, with reſpect to the privileges, that we derive from human authority: as, on the one hand, receding from any of them without cauſe is only inviting freſh encroachments, and giving needleſs advantages to ſuch as will be ſure to loſe none: ſo, on the other, ſtraining them too far is the likelieſt way to deſtroy them all at once: and both our uſefulneſs and our ſecurity depend very much, on our appearing plainly to deſire nothing inconſiſtent with the common good; to have the trueſt concern for all reaſonable liberty, and to be zealous only againſt licentiouſneſs and confuſion.

Thirdly, If we ſhould be tempted to oppoſe profaneneſs, by encouraging the oppoſite extreme of ſuperſtition: this alſo would be unjuſtifiable in itſelf; would have bad effects upon as many as we might miſ-

(*b*) 2 Cor. iv. 5.

lead; and give great opportunities to all that should see them misled, either of accusing religion, or exposing us, as corrupters of religion. Not that we are to give up inconsiderately, whatever some persons are pleased to charge with superstition: for there would be no end of concessions at that rate: but only to avoid encouraging any thing, that can be justly charged with it; and then we shall stand upon sure ground. For nothing can be more unjust, than those imputations of it, which our adversaries are so fond of throwing, some upon Christianity itself, others on the doctrine and worship of that church, of which, through God's merciful Providence, we have the happiness to be members.

Another very pernicious error would be, if we should think to serve our cause by intemperate warmth in it. Christian zeal indeed is a duty, that never was more needful, and never less shewn. But passion will do no good. If expressed against those, who are indifferent about religion, it will turn them into enemies: if against the enemies of religion, it will make them yet more vehement enemies. Besides, the extravagant things, that men say and attempt against us and our profession, are not always designed injuries; but frequently the effects of misrepresentations, and prejudices, that have imperceptibly taken hold on persons, who otherwise mean tolerably well. Now mildness to such as these, is but justice: and to all others, it is prudence. Railing is the province which our adversaries have chosen: and let us leave it to them. For whatever success they may meet with that way, as indeed they excel in it, we shall meet with none: but only make the spirit of Christianity be misunderstood and ill spoken of, by our own want of it. Therefore, how injuriously soever we may be treated, let us return neither injurious nor harsh treatment for it: nor endeavour to mark out those persons for objects of popular hatred, who are ever so unwearied in labouring to make us so. Yet, at the same time we must never court irreligious men by wrong compliances; never contribute to increase their power of doing harm; never desert our duty, either for fear of them, or favour from them. But then let us defend both religion and ourselves, with that fairness and decency, as well as courage, which becomes our function: acknowledge ingenuously whatever can be alledged against us with truth, only claiming equitable allowances; and where charges are untrue, yet use mild expostulations, not reproaches; and try to shame our opposers by the reasonableness of what we say, rather than exasperate them by the vehemence of it. They indeed have little cause either to complain or to triumph, if under such gross provocations as they give, our temper sometimes fails: but we have great cause to do our utmost, that it fail not.

And if undue severity of speech must be forborn towards professed enemies; much more to those, who may, for aught we know, design themselves for friends. Indeed, when it is evident, that men only put on a pretence of wishing well to Christianity, or the teachers of it; and, whilst they affect to charge us with uncharitableness for questioning their sincerity, would despise us for believing them: there we must be allowed to see what plainly appears; and to speak of them, both as adversaries, and unfair ones. Or when doctrines, whatever the intention of propagating them be, are inconsistent either with the whole or any part of our religion; it is no uncharitableness, but our duty, to lay open the

falſhood and the danger of them. Nay, ſuppoſing only the legal eſtabliſhment of religion, or ſome branch of it be attacked; yet the attempt may both be injurious enough to us, and detrimental enough to the public, to deſerve a vigorous oppoſition. But to ſhew paſſion and bitterneſs in any of theſe caſes; to take pleaſure in making men's miſtakes or deſigns thought worſe than they are; to judge harſhly of them with reſpect to another world, or expoſe them to ill uſage in this; to refuſe them due allowances for human infirmity, or be more backward to own their merits, than to ſee their faults: ſuch behaviour, inſtead of promoting truth, will prejudice the world againſt it; will give unbelievers dreadful advantages, and for ever prevent that union amongſt Chriſtians, which would procure us, above all things, the eſteem of men, and the bleſſing of God.

From theſe improper methods of ſupporting religion, let us now proceed to the proper ones. And they will naturally fall under the general heads of our inſtructions and our lives.

Giving inſtructions requires knowledge. And therefore, as a competent degree of it is juſtly expected of perſons, before they enter into holy orders: ſo, when they enter, the care of making a continual progreſs in it is ſolemnly promiſed by them, and covenanted for with them. What may be a very good beginning, is by no means a ſufficient ſtock to go on with; and even that will leſſen, if no pains be taken to increaſe it. Continued application then is a duty of importance. Perſons of lower abilities and attainments are in danger, without it, of being uſeleſs and deſpiſed: and they, who ſet out with greater advantages, are bound to endeavour at doing, in proportion, greater ſervices to the church of God. Without exception therefore, all who are engaged in ſo ſerious an employment as ours, if they have any regard either to their duty or their character, muſt take care, not to be more remarkable for their diverſions, than their ſtudies; nor indolently to trifle their time away, inſtead of employing it to good purpoſes. And though moſt parts of learning will be uſeful to us, and all parts ornamental; yet we muſt be ſure to remember, what we have been ſolemnly admoniſhed of, that no attention to any thing elſe, ought ever to draw us away from the purſuit of ſuch knowledge, as is properly theological. For to excel in other things, and be deficient in that, cannot but caſt a grievous reflection; either on us, for not ſtudying what we profeſs; or on our profeſſion, as having little in it worth ſtudying. Our principal buſineſs therefore muſt be, to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the Chriſtian faith: firſt the grounds, then the doctrines of it. And the previous qualifications for attempting this are, a due knowledge of the rules of right reaſoning, and of the moral and religious truths which nature teaches; of the ſtate of the world in its earlier ages, and in that when Chriſtianity firſt appeared. Theſe preparations being made, the great thing requiſite in the next place is a diligent ſearch into the holy Scripture. For there it is, that both the authentic ſyſtem of our belief, and the chief evidence for it, are exhibited to our view. Scripture therefore, above all things, the Infidel endeavours to ridicule; the miſtaken Chriſtian, to wreſt in ſupport of his errors: and if we deſire, either to confute them, or to ſatisfy ourſelves; our only way muſt be, to underſtand it well. For

which end it is quite necessary, that we make the original language, at least of the New Testament, familiar to us: and were that of the Old more commonly studied, the advantages would be very considerable.

In order to see clearly, on what ground our belief stands; together with the sacred volumes themselves, the writings of such learned persons, as have proved their authority, and vindicated their accounts of things, must be carefully read; and attentively compared with those objections against them, which have been revived of late, dressed up with so much art, and spread abroad with so much diligence. For in our present circumstances, we are always liable to be attacked: and consider, what an unhappy triumph it would afford, should we be found unprovided of a rational defence. It is very true, the general evidence, which we have for our faith, is abundantly sufficient of itself, to overbalance many difficulties concerning it, and ever so many cavils against it. But yet our being unqualified to give more particular answers, where they can be given; as indeed there are few cases, where they cannot; may often prove a great reproach to us, and a great stumbling-block to others.

Next to the grounds of religion, the doctrines of it, especially the more important and disputed ones, ought to be studied, with such diligence and impartiality, as may best discover to us the nature of every opinion, and the force of every argument: that so we may neither load Christianity with what doth not belong to it: nor betray, instead of defending it, by giving up what doth; but faithfully *keep that which is committed to our trust* (*c*), both entire and unmixed. To secure this great end, we must ever adhere strictly to the word of God, fairly interpreted by the help of all such means as Providence hath given us: and carefully avoid, on the one hand, fondness of novelty; and on the other, overgreat reverence of antiquity, especially such as comes short of the earliest. But against the former of these, it is peculiarly needful to caution the rising generation; whom the rashness of youth, and the petulant spirit of the present age, too often hurries into a strange vehemence for any imagination, which they have happened to take up; and prompts them to fly out against established doctrines, without having always the patience even to understand them. Such therefore should be exhorted to learn a proper degree, both of silence and suspense, till cooler thought, and farther inquiry, make them fitter judges of things. But besides those controversies, to which this caution chiefly relates; that between the Papists and us deserves at present to be well studied, by such of you, as live in the neighbourhood of any. For seldom have they shewn more zeal or more artifice than of late, in their attempts of making proselytes. And therefore it is of great consequence, that we provide ourselves against them, with a sufficient knowledge of their real doctrines, their most specious pleas, and the proper answers to them. Another subject, with which we are concerned to be well acquainted, is what relates to the government and worship, discipline and establishment of our own church. Different parts of our ecclesiastical constitution are frequently censured, by different sorts of persons, with very different views: though indeed the

(*c*) 1 Tim. vi. 20.

the moſt oppoſite of them have appeared, for ſome time, unaccountably diſpoſed to unite againſt us; and believers to join with Infidels in uſing their Chriſtian brethren ill. It may therefore be of great uſe, to inform ourſelves diligently concerning every thing of this nature, which is ſpoken of to our prejudice; and be always ready to ſhew the genuine ſtate of the caſe, with mildneſs and fairneſs. But no controverſies, however needful, muſt be ſuffered to divert our attention from what is of all things the moſt needful, the ſtudy of practical religion, and of the common duties of life. Theſe are the things, which mankind are moſt apt to fail in, and moſt concerned not to fail in: and therefore ſpending much time upon them, obtaining a thorough inſight into them, and having a deep ſenſe of them, is the very foundation of doing good, both to others and to our own ſouls.

A competent proviſion of knowledge being ſuppoſed, the next thing is communicating it to thoſe who are under our care, in ſuch manner as their circumſtances require.

The proofs of religion, both natural and revealed, all men ſhould be taught, and eſpecially at preſent, in the moſt intelligible and convincing manner. As for the objections againſt either: ſuch as it may be ſuppoſed they have thought or heard of, ſhould be diſtinctly anſwered; but the reſt obviated only, as occaſion offers. For to enter into them farther, would be miſpending time. Next to the truth of religion, they ſhould have its importance laid before them. The neceſſity of a moral life moſt men will own in general terms: only what they are pleaſed to call ſo, is often a very immoral one, both with reſpect to their fellow-creatures, and the government of themſelves. But regard to piety is ſtrangely loſt, even amongſt perſons, that are otherwiſe tolerably ſerious. Many have laid aſide all appearances of it: and others, who would ſeem to keep them up, do it with evident marks of indifference and contempt. It ſhould therefore be induſtriouſly ſhewn and inculcated, that an inward ſenſe of love and duty to God, founded on juſt conceptions of him, and expreſſing itſelf in frequent acts of worſhip, conſtant obedience and reſignation to him, is in truth *the firſt and great commandment* (*d*), the principal and moſt important of moral obligations. But then, beſides thoſe inſtances of piety, which reaſon requires of us, there are others, founded on relations equally real, and conſequently deſerving equal regard, enjoined by revelation. The utmoſt care therefore ought to be uſed, conſidering the preſent diſpoſition of the world, to convince men of what moment the doctrines and duties of the Goſpel are. To make reaſon ſufficient for nothing in religion, is to overturn every thing. But to inſiſt on its inſufficiency for many moſt valuable purpoſes, which revelation is fully ſufficient for, and on the neceſſity of obſerving whatever God hath thought fit to command, this is doing but common juſtice, though a very ſeaſonable piece of juſtice, to the doctrine of our bleſſed Saviour, and the authority of our Maker.

When once men are brought to underſtand the value of Chriſtianity, the next thing is, to give them a proportionable ſolicitude for it: to make them obſerve, how viſibly the belief and practice of it decay, and how dreadful the conſequences muſt be and are: to ſhew them, that re-

(*d*) Matth. xxii. 38.

ligion is not the concern of the clergy merely, but the common concern of all men; the great thing, on which public and private happiness depends in this life, as well as eternal felicity in the next: that therefore, if they have any value for these important interests, they must take the necessary means of securing them: their children, their servants and dependants must be diligently watched over and instructed; private devotion must be practised, family-worship revived, and the service of God in the church regularly and seriously attended upon. For laying aside these things hath almost banished religion from amongst us: and nothing, but restoring them, can bring it back. Piety is indeed seated in the heart: but to give it no vent in outward expression, is to stifle and extinguish it. Neglecting the public exercise of religion, is destroying the public regard to it: and teaching men to despise their own form of religion, is enough very often to make them despise it under any form.

Great pains have been taken by our adversaries to give the world an ill opinion of religious instruction: and we must take equal pains to give them a good one of it; by representing to them, both the natural influence it hath, and the Divine authority that enjoins it. But after all, the only effectual conviction will be that of experience. And therefore the chief point is, to endeavour that men may feel the benefit of our teaching: feel at least, that it is their own fault, not ours, if they do not become the wiser, the better and happier for it. To this end, we must all dwell often and strongly on the great duties, and great failures of duty, in common life: first explaining the obligations of religion so as that they may be practised; then insisting on it, that they must: entering into the particulars of each with such plainness, that every one may clearly see his own faults laid before him; yet with such prudence, that no one may so much as imagine himself personally pointed at: and taking the strictest care, that no part of what we say may seem in the least to proceed from our own passions, or our own interests; but all appear evidently to flow from a true concern for the good of those that hear us. Diligent consideration, what our subject and our several characters will bear us out in, must direct us, when to give our judgment with diffidence, when to lay stress upon it: in what cases to *exhort with all long-suffering* (*e*); in what, to *rebuke with all authority* (*f*). But whichsoever we do, neither our language should be florid, nor our manner theatrical: for these things only raise an useless admiration in weak persons, and produce great contempt in judicious ones. Nor yet on the other hand, should our expressions be mean, or our behaviour lifeless: but both must be suitable to the employment we are upon; both be such as come naturally from the heart of the speaker, and therefore will naturally move that of the hearer.

To this our public teaching it will be a great help, and indeed a valuable part of it, if we perform the several offices of our excellent liturgy devoutly and properly: neither with an irreverent precipitation, nor a tedious slowness: neither in a flat and languid manner, nor yet with an affected livelines, or a vehemence ill placed or over-done: but so as may

(*e*) 2 Tim. iv. 2. (*f*) Tit. ii. 15.

may beſt expreſs the ſenſe and the importance of what we read; and, by ſhewing our own attention to it, engage that of all around us.

Beſides our general inſtructions, it is very needful, that we give the youth under our care, in particular, an early knowledge and love of religion, that may abide with them; and ſtand the trials, to which their riper years will of courſe be expoſed. I hope you are all diligent in that moſt uſeful work of catechizing: and have done your utmoſt to prepare for confirmation thoſe whom you preſent to me. And I earneſtly recommend it to you, that the good impreſſions, which may well be ſuppoſed to have been made upon their minds at this ſeaſon, be not ſuffered to wear off again; but be improved into ſettled habits of religion and virtue by ſtill farther exhortations, and leading them, as ſoon as poſſible, to the holy communion. But, though all the youth deſerve our peculiar attention; yet if any of them be educated in charity-ſchools under our inſpection, for theſe we ſhould think ourſelves ſtill more nearly concerned, than for the reſt; and, by firſt taking care, to have them taught whatever is proper, and nothing elſe, then making known the good management they are under, put an end to thoſe accuſations, of their learning idleneſs and pride, ſuperſtition and diſloyalty; which may have been, ſometimes one of them, ſometimes another, in ſome degree deſerved; but have been carried with a wicked induſtry moſt ſhamefully beyond truth, and leſſened the credit of this excellent inſtitution, even with many good perſons, to the great detriment of Chriſtianity.

Another very uſeful method of ſpreading the knowledge of religion, and teaching men a ſerious regard to it, is by diſtributing or procuring to be diſtributed, ſuch pious books, eſpecially to the poorer ſort, as are beſt ſuited to their capacities and circumſtances. For there is a great variety of them to be had: and at ſo very low prices, that much good may be done this way to conſiderable numbers at once, in a moſt acceptable manner, for a trifling expence.

But nothing will contribute more to make our public inſtructions effectual, than private converſation, directed with prudence to the ſame end. The better we are known to perſons, the greater influence we may hope to have upon them: and the better we know them, the more diſtinctly we ſhall ſee how to make uſe of that influence to good purpoſes. By repreſenting proper truths, at fit times, with a modeſt freedom, we may very much abate the prejudices of men, who have any fairneſs remaining, both againſt religion and ourſelves: at leaſt we may prevail on them, for the ſake of public order and example, to keep within the bounds of decency; and ſo prevent their doing harm, if we cannot make them good. Perſons, that err in particular points of doctrine, friendly diſcourſe may ſhew us what led them into their miſtakes, and enable us to lead them out again. Such as diſſent from our church-government and worſhip, talking amicably with them, and behaving in the ſame manner towards them, if it doth not immediately bring them over, may however bring them nearer to us, both in judgment and affection. Such as are faulty in their moral conduct, ſerious and affectionate remonſtrances, given in private and kept private, and joined with a tenderneſs to their characters in public, may often do a great deal towards reforming them: and ſooner or later, the ſeed thus ſown may ſpring up in their hearts, and produce

produce happy fruits. We should not indeed press upon persons, when there is no other prospect than that of provoking them: but we ought to watch all opportunities, whilst there is any hope left; and not only make it our endeavour to convert the mistaken and vicious, but stir up the negligent to serious thought, and the good themselves to more eminent goodness. Especially such persons of rank and influence, as we find well disposed, these we must earnestly excite to appear and give countenance to the cause of religion, ever remembring that awful declaration of our blessed Lord: *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels* (*g*). We must convince them of the urgent necessity there is, for interposing in behalf of piety and virtue: and suggest to them the means for engaging with success in this excellent employment. Yet must we never spend so much of our attention on the higher part of the world, as to give the least suspicion of neglecting the lower; whose number is so much larger, whose dispositions are usually so much more favourable to religion, and whose eternal happiness is of equal importance to them, and ought to be of equal concern to us: but we must prove we are in earnest in our work; by making it our care, as it was our Master's, that *the poor have the Gospel preached to them* (*h*). And one opportunity of preaching it with singular advantage, both to the poor and the rich, is when sickness brings near to them the view of another life. At some times indeed the sick may be incapable of attending to exhortations: at others they may be endangered by them: and at all times great prudence is requisite, to avoid the extremes, of terrifying or indulging them too much. But, provided due caution be used in these respects; laying before them what they ought to be, and reminding them to consult their own consciences what they have been, is a most likely method of exciting in them such affections and resolutions at that season of recollection and seriousness, as, through the blessing of heaven, may produce the happiest effects.

To these excellent offices therefore we must all of us chearfully apply ourselves, each in such degree as his station requires. If they do require pains, if they do take up time, if they are inconsistent with agreeable amusements, and even interrupt useful studies of other kinds; yet this is the business which we have solemnly chosen, and the vows of God are upon us: it is the most important and most honourable, it ought to be the most delightful too, of all employments: and therefore we have every reason not to seek the means of evading our duty, but of fulfilling it; and each to *take the oversight of the flock of God*, committed to him, *not by constraint, but willingly* (*i*). For if we only just do what we can be punished by our superiors for neglecting, we must neither expect success nor reward.

But then to secure either, the chief thing requisite is still behind: that our own tempers and lives be such, as we say those of other persons should. For if we, who teach religion, live, or suffer our families to live, with little or no sense of religion, what can we possibly expect, but

(*g*) Mark viii. 38. (*h*) Matt. xi. 5. (*i*) Pet. v. 2.

but that men will improve ſo palpable an advantage againſt us to the utmoſt: will argue, that we believe not our own doctrine; and therefore it deſerves no belief: or, we practiſe not our own precepts; and therefore they cannot be practiſed? Thus we ſhall increaſe that infidelity and wickedneſs, which our buſineſs is to oppoſe. Too much of it will be really owing to us: and the whole will be laid upon us. The enemies of religion will have the beſt pretence in the world to ruin us: and the friends of it will grow unconcerned for us, and ready to give us up to them. But, were theſe conſequences not to follow, ſtill very bad ones muſt follow. Men, irreligious or vicious themſelves, cannot be hearty in oppoſing irreligion and vice: they cannot do it with boldneſs, if they were hearty: and could they be ever ſo bold, it muſt ſit much too ill upon them, to have any good effect. Wrong-minded perſons will be furniſhed with the moſt plauſible excuſe imaginable for diſregarding them intirely: and the righteſt-minded perſons that ever were, cannot, if they would, regard them as they ought. This will be the caſe, even with reſpect to their public teaching: and as for private admonitions, they will ſeldom have the face to venture upon them, and never ſucceed in them: whereas every word, that comes from an exemplary man, hath great weight; and his bare example is moſt valuable inſtruction of itſelf. But, were a bad life not to hinder at all the ſucceſs of our miniſtry; yet we muſt remember, it will abſolutely hinder the ſalvation of our ſouls: and ſubject us to that *ſorer puniſhment, of which he may well be thought worthy, who, teaching others, teacheth not himſelf, but through breaking the law diſhonoureth God* (*k*).

Nor is it ſufficient by any means for us to be guilty of no vice. This is ſmall praiſe, for one of our order. We are bound to be patterns of the moſt diligent practice of virtue, and the ſtricteſt regard to religion: and we ſhall never make others zealous for what we ourſelves appear indifferent about. It is very true, that, peculiarly in our caſe, the generality of the world both expect and find fault, quite beyond reaſon: and doubtleſs they are much to blame in doing ſo. But then ſurely we are no leſs to blame, if, when we know the ſeverity, with which our conduct will be examined, we do not watch over it with equal ſeverity ourſelves; and take the only way to be looked on as good men, that is, being ſuch undeniably. And whoever hath a due ſenſe of this obligation, will conſcientiouſly *abſtain*, not only *from all evil*, but *all appearance* of it too (*l*). Such a one, for inſtance, far from ever offending againſt temperance, will be noted for it: and think the imputation of being *mighty to drink wine* (*m*) almoſt as infamous, as that of being overcome by it. Far from being guilty of indecency in his behaviour or diſcourſe, he will keep at a diſtance from every thing liable to the conſtruction of it. Far from being remarkable for luxury and delicacy in his manner of living or appearing, he will be ſure to preſerve himſelf, on all occaſions, at leaſt as remote from indulgence, as he is from auſterity. And though he will never diſguſt the perſons, with whom he converſes, by a gravity affected or ill timed: yet he will be equally careful, never to expoſe himſelf, by

(*k*) Heb. x. 29. Rom. ii. 21, 23. (*l*) 1 Theſſ. v. 22.
(*m*) Iſ. v. 22.

by a lightness of carriage unbecoming his function; nor let any thing be a part of his character, much less a distinguishing part, that can only tend to lower it. For we can never be useful, if we are despised: and we shall be despised, if we will give opportunities for it. Even they, who seem well pleased with us, will think meanly of us inwardly; and perhaps of the whole order, for our sakes.

Yet at the same time, we shall be greatly mistaken, if we aim to avoid contempt by haughtiness: which will only add hatred to it. Our rule therefore must be, to express, in every thing, condescension to the lower part of the world, without being improperly familiar; and respect to the upper, without being servile: recommending ourselves at once to the love and esteem of both, by a mild kind of dignity and ingenuous simplicity, kept up through our whole behaviour. Mildness of temper is the duty of every man: but especially required of us (*n*); and absolutely necessary, both to our preserving regard, and doing service in the world. Therefore, whatever provocations we meet with from those amongst whom we live, as indeed we often meet with great ones, it neither belongs to our character, nor will be for our interest, to take offence and express resentment; but by prudence and patience to *overcome evil with good* (*o*). For we shall often do it this way, and never any other. Instead of being engaged in enmities of our own, it should be our endeavour to compose the differences of other persons: not by intermeddling in their affairs, when we are not called to it; but by laying hold on every fit opportunity given us, for disposing them to a mutual good opinion, where there is room for it; or at least, to mutual good-will. Too many occasions indeed for friendly interposition, our unhappy party-disputes furnish us with, had we no other. Entring into these with vehemence, and that injustice which never fails to accompany vehemence, is what all men should avoid: but we, who must caution them against it, should avoid it with uncommon care: should religiously pay that respect to every one, which is their due, especially to our superiors; think well of men's actions and designs, unless we have evident cause to think otherwise; judge with modesty, where perhaps we are not qualified to judge; and whatever our opinion be, preserve our behaviour inoffensive: give the least provocation, that may be, to bad men of any side; and act in such manner, as may gain us, if possible, the united esteem of good men of all sides. For theirs is the friendship, of which we ought to be ambitious. Familiarities with profane and vicious persons, beyond what necessary civility, or a real prospect of reforming them requires, will, whatever we may promise ourselves from their favour or interest, always discredit and weaken us in general; and much oftner prove hurtful, than advantageous, to any of us in particular. But to cultivate the good opinion of the wise and virtuous, to recommended ourselves to their protection, and, whatever else they may differ about, engage their common zeal in the common cause of religion: this will procure us both security and honour, and every way promote the great design of our profession.

Another point, on which our character will not a little depend, is our being,

(*n*) Matth. x. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 24.
(*o*) Rom. xii. 21.

being, in a reaſonable degree, diſintereſted. A very large proportion indeed of the clergy have too much cauſe to endeavour at bettering their circumſtances: and it is barbarous treatment, to accuſe them for it, inſtead of pitying them. But over-great ſolicitude and contrivance for advancing ourſelves will always make impreſſions to our prejudice, let our condition be ever ſo low: though deſervedly much ſtronger impreſſions, in proportion as it is higher. We ſhall be thought to have no attention, but that, of which we diſcover too much: and the truth is *we cannot ſerve two maſters* (*p*). Nor will it be ſufficient, that we avoid the charge of immoderately deſiring more; unleſs we avoid alſo that of ſelfiſhneſs, in the management of what we have already: a matter, in which it is very difficult, and yet very important, to give no offence. We are bound, both to thoſe who belong to us, and thoſe who ſhall come after us, to take a proper care of our legal dues: and preſerve them faithfully from the encroachments of ſuch, as tell us very truly, that we ought not to be worldly-minded; but forget what is equally true, that they themſelves ought not to be ſo. But then the ſtrongeſt reaſons of all kinds oblige us, never to make unjuſt or litigious claims; never to do any thing, either hard or rigorous, or mean and ſordid: to ſhew, that we deſire always the moſt eaſy and amicable method of ending diſputes; and whatever method we may be forced to take, never to let any thing force us into the leaſt degree of unfairneſs, paſſion or ill-will; but endeavour, by all inſtances of friendly behaviour, to win, if poſſible, upon the perſon we have to do with; at leaſt to convince every body elſe, how very far we are from intending wrong to him, or any one.

And nothing will contribute more, to acquit us from the ſuſpicion of being ſelfiſh in our dealings with other perſons; than approving ourſelves charitable to the poor: a virtue which becomes us ſo extremely, and is ſo peculiarly expected from us, and will give us ſo valuable an influence; that we ſhould willingly ſtraiten ourſelves in almoſt any thing beſides, that, to the full proportion of our abilities, we may abound in giving alms. And together with this, would we but, each in his ſtation, take the beſt care we can to ſee juſtice done them in that proviſion, which the law hath intended for them, it would generally prove a much more conſiderable benefaction, than all that we are able to beſtow on them of our own.

To the above-mentioned inſtances of right conduct we muſt always add, what will render them very engaging, the occaſional kind offices of good neighbourhood; with a decent hoſpitality alſo, if our circumſtances will permit it: and then, notwithſtanding the cenſures of thoſe, who complain that we are of little uſe, and endeavour to make us of none, we may ſurely well hope to do ſervice to God, and be eſteemed of men: eſpecially if, together with ſo exemplary a behaviour towards others, we are friendly and compaſſionate, candid and equitable amongſt ourſelves.

Great injuſtice, I am ſatisfied, is done us on this head: and many groundleſs accuſations brought confidently againſt us, by perſons, who neither enquire into facts, nor conſider circumſtances. But there are few

(*p*) Matt. vi. 24.

few things, in which it concerns us more, to clear ourselves where we are innocent, and to amend ourselves where we are faulty. For so long as we are thought in the world, either insolent to our inferiour brethren in general, or void of generosity and pity to such of them as we employ; we must not expect to receive better treatment, than we are understood to give. And if we are believed to be chargeable, beyond other men, with mutual bitterness and vehemence, when any kind of controversy rises amongst us; this too is a character, so very different from that which ought to be ours, that the utmost care should be taken to guard against it. Not that we are obliged, either to speak of or behave to men of bad lives, or bad principles, as if they were good ones, because unhappily they belong to our order. Making no distinction would be on all accounts wrong: and making a proper distinction will be very useful. But then we should never think worse of our brethren, than evidence forces us; never publish our ill opinion, without sufficient reason; nor exceed, when we do publish it, the bounds of moderation: we should be ready to shew them all fitting kindness, even whilst they continue blamable; and receive them back with the most charitable tenderness, when they return to their duty. For there is no manner of need, that we should give either so much advantage or so much pleasure to the adversaries of religion, as to let them see those, who should be the joint-defenders of it, engaged in domestic wars: and bringing such charges, and raising such prejudices, one against another, that it is hard to say, whether believing or disbelieving our mutual accusations will make the world think worse of us. Our blessed Lord therefore, after reminding his Disciples, that *they were the salt of the earth*; were designed, by the purity of their doctrine and example, to keep others from corruption; and after giving them that prophetic warning, which we shall find men zealous to fulfil, that *if the salt have lost its savour, it shall be cast out and trodden under foot* (*q*); resuming the same figure at another time, concludes his exhortation thus, *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another* (*r*).

To these things, Brethren, if we have any concern for the interests of religion or our own, we must always industriously attend; but especially in such times, as by no means admit of negligence or mismanagement. Yet vain will our best endeavours be, unless we constantly add to them our fervent prayers, that God would enable and strengthen, both us, and all that serve him in the Gospel of his Son, to perform our duty with faithfulness and success. For *we are not sufficient to think any thing of ourselves: our sufficiency is of God* (*s*). What therefore we ought, every one of us, to beg of him at all times, let us all at present jointly address to him for, in the comprehensive and expressive words of our public service.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified; receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy church; that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen (*t*).

(*q*) Matth. v. 13.
(*r*) Mark ix. 50.
(*s*) 2 Cor. iii. 5.
(*t*) Second Collect for Good Friday.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD,

In the YEAR 1741.

Reverend Brethren,

WHEN I had firſt the pleaſure of meeting you, being very much a ſtranger, I could only lay before you ſuch general admonitions as appeared to be ſeaſonable in this unhappy age of irreligion and libertiniſm. But having now obtained a fuller acquaintance with things, chiefly from your Anſwers to my printed Enquiries, which have given me many reaſons to eſteem and reſpect you; I ſhall at preſent deſcend into ſome farther particulars: and conſidering you, not merely as miniſters of the Goſpel at large, but as miniſters of the ſeveral pariſhes in which you officiate, remind you of ſome plain directions for your doing it more ſucceſsfully: which I ſhall deliver with leſs diffidence, and you

you will receive with greater regard, for their being chiefly ſuch as have been often recommended with good effect on ſuch occaſions as this.

I begin with one of the loweſt in appearance, but not the leaſt important of eccleſiaſtical employments: catechizing the children under your care.

The catechiſm conſiſts of the fundamental articles of Chriſtian faith and practice. Without learning theſe we know not ſo much as what it is we profeſs to be; and there is great danger that unleſs perſons learn them at firſt, they will never learn them throughly: but only pick up from what they hear or read, unconnected and ſometimes ill grounded notions, that will never unite into a complete or a conſiſtent form of ſound doctrine: as I apprehend we have had too much experience. The Rubric therefore requires, *that every perſon learn the catechiſm before his confirmation:* and the 59th Canon, that *every Incumbent ſhall examine and inſtruct the young and ignorant of his pariſh in it for half an hour or more every Sunday.* Every ſecond Sunday had been appointed before: but that I ſuppoſe was judged afterwards inſufficient. Not that a ſtrict obſervation of this rule was probably expected, during the winter ſeaſon, in the generality of country pariſhes, or where the children being few were more eaſily taught. But plainly it was intended, that how much time ſoever was needful to do this work well, ſhould be faithfully employed in it. I thank God, there are very few places in this Dioceſe, and I hope there will ſoon be none, where catechizing is omitted. But I obſerve that in many it is practiſed only during lent. Now I ſhould apprehend that the ſummer ſeaſon would in general be much more convenient both for the miniſter and the congregation. But at leaſt the ſpace of a few weeks is by no means ſufficient to fix the knowledge of their Chriſtian duty ſo firmly in the minds of young people, but that in the many months which paſs from the end of one lent to the beginning of another, a great part of it will be to learn again. Therefore whenever this exerciſe is begun, it ſhould be continued much longer: and whenever the conſtant repetition of it is left off, it ſhould be occaſionally reſumed for a Sunday or two, at proper diſtances of time.

Another defect in ſome places is, that barely the words of the catechiſm are taught without any expoſition. Now the very plaineſt expreſſions in it will need to be varied into others that are equivalent: elſe children will too often learn nothing but the ſound: and unleſs this danger, which is a very great one, be guarded againſt, you will have ſpent both their pains and your own but to ſmall purpoſe. Beſides, all ſciences have their terms, which muſt be interpreted to beginners: and ſome of thoſe in the catechiſm are figurative ones; very prudently uſed, as they comprehend in a little compaſs much meaning, and lead to the underſtanding of the ſame figures in Scripture; but undoubtedly uſed on purpoſe to be explained: without which they are liable to make either no impreſſion or a wrong one. And farther ſtill, a ſyſtem ſo ſhort as to be learnt by heart, muſt have need, were it ever ſo clear, to be enlarged on; the proofs of its truth, the connections and tendency of its doctrines, the uſe and extent of its precepts to be ſhewn: and therefore ſince the Canon with great reaſon enjoins, not only that you examine, but inſtruct the children in their catechiſm, I hope you will think this a very

needful

needful part of that inſtruction. As to the manner of it, that may be different, not only in different places, but in the ſame at different times. Sometimes a continued diſcourſe of ſome length may be requiſite: as it will lay before the adult part of your pariſhioners a methodical ſummary of Chriſtian doctrine; which they often want very much for themſelves, and will thus be enabled to teach ſomething of to their children, after they have heard it together from you.

Sometimes a curſory expoſition of the more difficult expreſſions may deſerve the preference. But aſking the children queſtions, relating to each part, and procuring them to learn texts of ſcripture confirming each, will be always beneficial. The words of the catechiſm itſelf may be very uſefully broken into ſhorter queſtions and anſwers: to which others may be added out of any one of the many good expoſitions that have been made public. Only you ſhould endeavour as ſoon and as much as you can to make this a trial and improvement of the underſtanding as well as the memory of young people, by aſking ſuch things as they ſhould reply to in words of their own; making that eaſy to them in every poſſible way. And indeed, if many of your queſtions were formed to be anſwered merely by affirming or denying, it would be a very good method: and there is an expoſition drawn up in that manner.

I am ſenſible that ſome clergymen are unhappily obliged to ſerve two churches the ſame afternoon: who may therefore plead, that they have ſcarce ever time to hear the children repeat their catechiſm, much leſs to explain it to them. And God forbid that any needleſs addition ſhould ever be made to their burthen. But as I am ſure they will be deſirous of doing what they are able, in a matter of this importance, ſo I ſhould hope that in the longer days, at each of their churches alternately, they might hear the catechiſm repeated one Sunday and expound part of it another, or hear only part of it repeated and expound that, or find ſome way to prevent the entire omiſſion of ſo neceſſary a duty. And if theſe can do any thing of this kind, there is no doubt but others may eaſily do more.

But a farther hindrance which I fear you complain of too juſtly is, that parents and maſters are negligent in ſending their children and ſervants; and the latter eſpecially are both unwilling and often aſhamed to come. Now the Canon doth indeed make proviſion for puniſhing ſuch. But perſuading them would be much happier. And ſurely in ſo clear a caſe, well timed and well judged arguments, if perſiſted in, muſt do a great deal. The example of their equals or their betters, if you have any under your care that are wiſe enough to ſet a good one; or however that of your own families, may help very much: and ſuch little rewards of good books, or other encouragements as you can give or procure for them, it may be hoped, will completely prevail with them. At leaſt ſuch as think they are either too old or too conſiderable to ſay the catechiſm themſelves, may be greatly improved by hearing others repeat, and you explain it.

But in ſome few places it is pleaded, that the children cannot read, and their parents either cannot or will not get them taught, and therefore the foundation for their learning the catechiſm is wanting. But ſurely ſome perſon might be found, within a moderate diſtance from

every place, to whom parents might be induced, at least if something were contributed towards it, to send their children to be instructed thus far. Or at the worst, they who cannot read might easily by degrees learn so much as the catechism by heart: especially as the three main parts of it are in every Sunday's prayers. The incapacity of reading was almost general at the time of the reformation: yet even in those days the clergy were able to teach first parents and housholders, then by their means children and servants, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments: and afterwards the rest of the catechism. Now since that gross darkness hath been so far enlightened, it cannot be impracticable to dispel the remains of it.

After due instruction follows confirmation: an appointment derived down from Apostolical practice; and of such acknowledged usefulness that in the times of confusion, a hundred years ago, when bishops were rejected, some of their adversaries took upon them to perform this part of their function: and within these few years the church of *Geneva* hath restored it in the best manner their form of church government will admit, and added an office for it to their liturgy. In our own church the ancient esteem of this institution is, generally speaking, so well preserved, that I hope the desire of being confirmed may not a little strengthen that of being instructed as the only way to it. And yet I must observe, that the numbers from some parishes have been in proportion very small. This may not have arisen from any neglect in the minister: but as it ought to incline me to make the opportunities of confirmation as convenient as I am able; so it ought to incline you, agreeably to the nature of your function, and the express direction of the 61st Canon, to use your best endeavours, that your parishioners may gladly take those opportunities. Yet I must intreat you to endeavour at the same time, that none be brought, but those who, to speak in the language of the Rubric, *are come to years of discretion*, who have learnt, not the words only, but, in a competent degree, the meaning of what was promised for them in baptism; who can say with seriousness and truth, (what surely else they ought not to say at all,) that *in the presence of God and the congregation they ratify and confirm the same in their own persons*; and who therefore are likely to have useful and lasting impressions made on them by this solemnity. Undoubtedly some arrive at this capacity sooner than others, and therefore I have mentioned the age of fourteen, not with a design of absolutely tying you down to it; but as being, for the most part, full early enough; and that, where you see it requisite, you may, without giving offence yourselves, oppose my order to the indiscreet forwardness of parents; whom however, I hope, it will make easy, to assure them, as I give you authority, that so long as it pleases God to continue my health and strength, confirmations shall be frequent in every part of this Diocese. I must also desire that you will carefully instruct those whom you do bring, in the whole nature of the institution, and particularly in this, amongst other more important points, that they are never to be confirmed any more than baptized a second time: that you will direct them to make the proper answers audibly through the whole of the office, which many of them seem to have no notion of, though it is so necessary in the nature of the thing, and tends so much both to fix their attention,

tion, and to give the ſolemnity a decent and edifying appearance. You will caution them likewiſe not to crowd forward and incommode each other, uſing this argument for one, that the whole number who come in at the ſame time will be diſmiſſed at the ſame time alſo: and laſtly you will preſs it ſtrongly upon their minds, that what they promiſe at their confirmation, they are to remember and keep to their lives end. I have already deſired of you, on theſe occaſions, a liſt of ſuch as you judge qualified; that ſo the numbers and perſons may be known: of this you would do well to keep a copy yourſelves, and if it were written alphabetically, both you and I ſhould be able to conſult it upon the ſpot more eaſily. For the abovementioned Canon, the 61ſt, plainly directs your attendance along with your pariſhioners; to take eſpecial care (for ſo the words run) *that none be preſented but ſuch as you know are fit.* And as your being preſent to approve or diſapprove muſt needs increaſe your influence and authority amongſt your people; it muſt likewiſe make the diſcharge of my duty ſo very much eaſier and more uſeful, that I beg you will never let me be without your aſſiſtance in this work, as you ſhall never be without mine in any thing. And for this purpoſe when confirmations are on a Sunday, which is the time I ſhall uſually pitch upon, for the convenience of the people, excepting at the places of my viſitation, you may omit for that day the morning or the evening prayers as you ſee occaſion. I have not indeed hitherto been able to effect, what would greatly ſhorten your labour, calling up your ſeveral pariſhes in their order ſeparately. But I ſhall be very glad to do it, as ſoon as ever you can introduce this order amongſt them, which I earneſtly recommend to you: and I hope a continued frequency of confirmations will ſoon make that feaſible without difficulty here, which is now practiſed conſtantly in the populous cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*.

From confirmation perſons ought to be led on, if poſſible, before the impreſſions of it are much weakened, to the holy ſacrament: and it is one material reaſon why confirmation ſhould not be too early, that with a little farther inſtruction given ſoon after it, you may eaſily bring them, ſuch as they ought to be, to the Lord's table: which may prove a much harder matter, when once they have been a good while out of your hands. The ſmall proportion of communicants which I find there is in moſt of your congregations, and very ſmall in ſome, muſt undoubtedly (as this ordinance is appointed for all Chriſtians, and for a ſtanding means of grace to all) be a ſubject of very great concern to you. And though it is too true, that the generality of the world, and perhaps the lower ſort beyond others, are incredibly obſtinate in their prejudices, eſpecially in ſuch as at all favour corrupt nature: yet our complaining of theſe prejudices is not enough; but labouring to overcome them is our buſineſs, and we are not to grow weary of it. Some imagine that the ſacrament belongs only to perſons of advanced years, or great leiſure, or high attainments in religion, and is a very dangerous thing for common perſons to venture upon. Some again diſregard it ſtupidly, becauſe others, they ſay, who do receive are never the better for it; or becauſe their friends before them, or their neighbours about them never received at all, or not till ſuch an age: and why ſhould they? You will therefore repreſent to them, that whoever receives without benefit, it is his own

fault; and that how many soever omit it either for part of their lives or the whole, not their example but the word of God is the rule for Christians: that far from being a terrible or ensnaring institution, it is in reality a most gracious one: designed to be celebrated with humility indeed, but with comfort and joy: that all the preparation it requires is within the reach of the plainest head and the most laborious hand, provided there be only an honest and pious heart, and that the judgment which unworthy receivers eat and drink to themselves, needs no more affright those whom God in his mercy will consider as worthy; as he certainly will every true penitent; than the capital punishments, threatened by the law to crimes, make innocent persons uneasy: that he whose life unfits him for the sacrament, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven also; and he, who being qualified for it, neglects it, neglects a dying command of his Lord and Saviour, intended for the greatest good to him. But your public instructions on this head will be much more effectual for being followed by seasonable private applications: in which you will hear and answer their objections, be they of ever so little weight, with great meekness; not be provoked by any perverseness of theirs to shew anger, but only a friendly concern; and even if you meet with an absolute repulse, leave them with an assurance that you shall apply to them again, in hopes that God will have disposed them better to obey his precepts.

But besides increasing the number of your communicants, it were very desirable, that they who do communicate should do it more frequently. In the three first centuries the eucharist was every where celebrated weekly, and in many places almost daily. Decay of piety occasioned an injunction in the sixth, that every Christian should receive thrice in the year; which was reduced in the thirteenth, perhaps with a bad intention, to once. Our church requires thrice *at the least:* which evidently implies, that more than thrice is hoped for. And indeed each person will scarce be able to communicate so often unless the communion be administered oftener. But besides, it is appointed to be every Lord's day in cathedral and collegiate churches, and part of the office for it is read every Lord's day in every church, for an admonition of what it were to be wished the people could be brought to. This indeed at best must be a work of time: but one thing might be done at present in all your parishes, as God be thanked, it is in most of them: a sacrament might easily be interposed in that long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas: and the usual season for it, about the feast of St. Michael, (when your people having gathered in the fruits of the earth have some rest from their labours, and must surely feel some gratitude to the Giver of all good) is a very proper time. And if afterwards you can advance from a quarterly communion to a monthly one, I make no doubt but you will.

Upon this subject I must observe to you farther, that though in one or two parishes of this Diocese the old custom is retained, of oblations for the minister, as well as alms for the poor, to both which the sentences appointed to be read are plainly adapted: yet in many parishes there is no offertory at all: though it be certainly a practice of primitive antiquity, a most proper admonition and specimen of charity; which I fear the generality of Christians much want to be reminded of; a most

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ſeaſonable demonſtration of our loving our brethern for his ſake, who hath loved us; and a thing expreſsly enjoined in the Rubric of the communion office. Why therefore ſhould you not attempt to revive it, where it hath been intermitted? Merely preſenting to perſons an opportunity of giving if they think fit, and only what they think fit, can ſurely, (if the reaſons of it be explained to them beforehand) never keep any one away from the ſacrament. But then, though all who have not abſolutely nothing, ought undoubtedly to contribute their mite, yet no diſagreeable notice ſhould ever be taken of any, for giving but little or not giving at all: and whatever is collected, ſhould be diſpoſed of, ſo that all perſons may know it, with the greateſt faithfulneſs, prudence, and impartiality.

Another part of Divine worſhip, concerning which I think it needful to ſpeak, is pſalmody: a part clearly appointed in Scripture, both expreſſive and productive of devout affections, extremely well fitted to diverſify long ſervices, and peculiarly to diſtinguiſh the ſeveral parts of our own, which were originally ſeparate. Our eccleſiaſtical laws do not indeed require it under any penalty: becauſe there may not every where be perſons qualified to perform it decently. But wherever there are, the Rubric makes proviſion for it, and I recommend to you that it be not omitted. You will always endeavour that your pariſh-clerks be perſons of diſcretion as well as ſkill and ſerioufneſs. But however you will be much ſurer of no impropriety happening in this part of the worſhip, if you either direct them every Sunday to ſuitable pſalms, or aſſign them a courſe of ſuch to go orderly through. And unleſs the generality of your pariſhioners are provided with books and able to make uſe of them; ordering each line to be read, will both ſecure a greater number of ſingers and be very inſtructive to many who cannot ſing. All perſons indeed who are by nature qualified ought to learn, and conſtantly join to glorify him that made them, in pſalms and ſpiritual ſongs. This was the practice of the early Chriſtians: it was reſtored very juſtly at the reformation, and hath declined of late, within moſt of our memories, very unhappily. For the improvements made by a few in church-muſic, were they real improvements, will ſeldom equal the harmony of a general chorus; in which any leſſer diſſonances are quite loſt: and it is ſomething inexpreſſibly elevating, to hear the *voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters and of mighty thunders*, to ſpeak in the words of Scripture, *making a joyful noiſe to the God of their ſalvation, and ſinging his praiſes with underſtanding.* Perſons of a ludicrous turn may repreſent every thing in a wrong light: but thoſe of any ſerioufneſs, if they will lay aſide falſe delicacy, and that prepoſterous ſhame of religious performances, with which the preſent age is ſo fatally tainted, will find themſelves very pioufly affected only by hearing this melody, much more by bearing a part in it: and therefore I beg you will encourage all your pariſhioners, eſpecially the youth, to learn pſalmody; and excite them, if there be need, with ſome little reward: for you will thus make the ſervice of God abundantly more agreeable, and their attendance on it more conſtant. But then, where any knowledge of the old common tunes remains, you ſhould endeavour principally that your learners may perfect themſelves in theſe; that ſo they may lead and aſſiſt the reſt of the con-

gregation, who ſhould always join with them: or if you muſt admit a mixture of new and uncommon tunes, it ſhould be no greater than you find yourſelves in prudence abſolutely obliged to. Elſe the conſequence will be, what I fear many of you have experienced, that either one part of your people will reſent being unjuſtly ſilenced, and this by the introduction of tunes often not ſo good as their former ones, and ſo your pariſh will be divided and uneaſy: or if they agree to the change ever ſo generally and like it ever ſo well, yet your ſelect ſingers will either be weary in a while of what only novelty recommended to them, or grow conceited and ungovernable, or die off, or be diſperſed, and the congregation will be left unable to ſing in any manner at all. Where indeed the newer tunes have quite blotted out the memory of the old ones, all you can do is, to make uſe of what you find in uſe, to get ſome of the eaſieſt of them learnt as generally as you can, and keep to theſe. And if, in order to inſtruct your people in either way of ſinging, meetings to practiſe out of church-time be requiſite, you will keep a ſtrict watch over them, that they may be managed with all poſſible decency, and never continued till candle-light, if they conſiſt of both ſexes. You will likewiſe diſcountenance, at leaſt, all frequent meetings, between the ſingers of different pariſhes, and making appointments to ſing alternately at one anothers churches: for this wandering from their own, which by law they ought to keep to, uſually leads them into exceſſes and follies.

I am very ſenſible, that ſome of the things which I have been mentioning, are by no means of equal importance with others. But nothing is without its importance, that relates to Divine worſhip. The mere outward behaviour of thoſe who attend upon it is of ſuch uſe, and good influence, that I muſt deſire you will be diligent in teaching them, (but ſo as to perſuade, not provoke them) what reverence belongs to the houſe of God: particularly how very wrong it is to ſit inſtead of kneeling when they are or ſhould be addreſſing themſelves to their Maker, and to ſhew how indecent that appearance is of diſregard to him, which they would not uſe on any account to one of their fellow-creatures a little ſuperior to themſelves. If you could only breed up the younger to a right behaviour in this reſpect, your congregations would grow regular in time. But mild expoſtulations will ſurely in ſo plain a caſe produce ſome effect upon the reſt alſo, which will be much facilitated if you take care that proper conveniences for kneeling be provided for them. And if you could convince them alſo that ſtanding is a more reverent poſture to ſing pſalms to God in, as well as to read them, than ſitting, you would come ſo much the nearer to the Apoſtolical rule *of doing all things decently*. For as ſome of the pſalms contain the nobleſt acts of adoration, ſurely they ought not to be ſung in a poſture unfit to expreſs it. Another thing, and no ſmall one, which I believe many of your pariſhioners often want to be admoniſhed of, is to come before the ſervice begins. Undoubtedly allowance is to be made for neceſſary, eſpecially unforeſeen, buſineſs, and ſome allowance for not knowing the time exactly: but I hope you will obviate both theſe pleas as far as you can, by conſulting their convenience in the hour you fix, and then keeping punctually to it. And at the ſame time you will remind them, that a due degree of zeal in re-

ligion would incline them to be rather a great deal too early at the houſe of God, than a little too late: that no part of the ſervice can be more needful for them, than that which comes firſt; the confeſſion of their ſins: that inſtruction in their duty is better learnt from the pſalms and leſſons, which are the word of God, than from ſermons, which are only our explanations of it: and that by coming ſo irregularly, they not only are great loſers themſelves, but diſturb and offend others.

But it is not ſufficient to give you directions about ſuch as do come to church, without taking notice of the great numbers which I find there are in many, if not moſt, of your pariſhes, that omit coming. Now on theſe your preaching indeed can have no immediate influence. But it may however prevent the increaſe of them; and furniſh others with arguments againſt them; and with the beſt of arguments, their experience of its good effects. You will therefore queſtionleſs do all you can in this way, without uſing any expreſſions in relation to their fault, which if repeated to them may exaſperate them. But your chief dependance muſt be on private application to them, varied ſuitably to the occaſion of their neglect. If it ariſes merely from ignorance, or ſloth, or want of thought, they muſt be plainly told what they owe to their Maker, and awakened to the hopes and fears of a future life. If it be deſire of gain or of pleaſure that keeps them away, they muſt be aſked what it will *profit them to gain the whole world and loſe their own ſouls?* or ſhewn that to be lovers *of pleaſure more than of God* will lend in pains eternal. If they defend themſelves, by pleading, as ſome will, that nothing can be told them at church but what they are acquainted with already, it will ſurely not be hard to ſhew them that they over-rate their knowledge: that if this were otherwiſe they may however be reminded of what they did not think of, or excited to what they did not practiſe: that, were they too perfect to receive any benefit, it would not be decent for them to tell the world ſo by their behaviour: that at leaſt they ought to ſet others an example who may be the better for public inſtruction: and laſtly, that receiving inſtruction is not the whole of Divine ſervice, but praying the chief part. And though it is allowed they can pray at home privately, yet without enquiring whether they do, ſince God hath commanded, for plain and important reaſons, that we worſhip him publicly, and hath excepted no one: by what authority doth any one except himſelf? And what will this end in, but an univerſal neglect of a duty which our Maker hath required to be univerſally practiſed? If it be any ſcruple about the lawfulneſs of coming to church that keeps perſons away, fit opportunities ſhould be ſought with great care, and uſed with great prudence, to ſet them right: and ſuch diſſenters, for many there are, as do not think our manner of worſhip ſinful, but only prefer another, which perhaps they are often without the means of attending upon, ſhould be ſeriouſly entreated to conſider, how they can juſtify ſeparating from a lawful communion appointed by lawful authority, and even omitting all public worſhip frequently rather than worſhip with us. But then with whichſoever of theſe perſons we diſcourſe, not the leaſt perſonal anger muſt be ſhewn, nothing but a concern about their future happineſs. For by this means if we make them no better, we ſhall at leaſt make them no worſe, and perhaps may leave

in their hearts what will some time or other work there. Persons who profess themselves not to be of our church, if persuasions will not avail, must be let alone. But other absenters after due patience must be told in the last place, that unwilling as you are, it will be your duty to present them, unless they reform: and if, when this warning hath been repeated, and full time allowed for it to work, they still persist in their obstinacy, I beg you to do it. For this will tend much to prevent the contagion from spreading, of which there is else great danger: and when once you have got them, though it be against their inclinations, within reach of your pulpit, who knows what good may follow? Different cases may indeed require difference of treatment: and both the same severity and the same mildness, that will subdue one, will harden another. You will therefore act yourselves and advise your church-wardens to act in this matter according to your discretion. And after a prosecution is begun, it shall still depend on your opinion whether it shall be carried on with rigour, or suspended a while in hopes of amendment. Only one caution I would give you. Let not any person's threatenings, that, if he is prosecuted, he will go over to the dissenters, move you in the least. Such will seldom do what they threaten: or if they do, 'tis better they should serve God in any way than none; and much better they should be a disgrace to them than to us. I must not conclude this head without desiring you to remind your people, that our liturgy consists not only of morning but evening prayer also: that the latter is in proportion equally edifying and instructive with the former; and so short, that, generally speaking, there can arise no inconvenience from attending upon it, provided persons are within any tolerable distance from the church: that few of them have business at that time of day; and amusements ought surely never to be preferred on the Lord's day before religion: not to say that there is room for both.

But besides the public service, your people should be admonished to spend a due part of their sabbath in private exercises of piety. For this is almost the only time, that the far greater part of them have for meditating on what they have heard at church; for reading the Scripture and other good books; for the serious consideration of their ways; for giving such instruction to their children and families, as will make your work both easier and more effectual. And therefore, though one would not by any means make their day of rest wearisome, nor forbid cheerfulness, and even innocent festivity upon it, much less the expressions of neighbourly civility and good-will, which are indeed a valuable part of the gracious ends of the institution: yet employing a reasonable share of it seriously at home as well as at church, and preserving an especial reverence of God even throughout the freer hours of it, is necessary to make it a blessing to them in reality, instead of a season of leisure to ruin themselves, as it proves too often.

But farther, besides your and their duty on the Lord's day, it is appointed that all ministers of parishes read prayers on holy-days, on Wednesdays, and Fridays: and undoubtedly your endeavours to procure a congregation at such times ought not to be wanting. Were I to repeat to you the strong expressions which my great predecessor Bishop *Fell* used, in requiring this part of ecclesiastical duty, they would surprise you. But

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I content myself with saying, that public worship was from the very first ages constantly performed on the two stationary days of each week; that all holydays appointed by the church were carefully observed by the clergy, and the number of them now is not burthensome: that where you can get a competent number to attend at these times, you will act a very pious and useful, as well as regular part: that your own houses will sometimes furnish a small congregation; and what success you may have with others, nothing but trials, repeated from time to time, can inform you. But they, whose parishioners are the fewest and the busiest of all, I hope do not fail in bringing them to church at the least on Good Friday, and Christmas Day, besides Sundays. For though in some of your answers to my enquiries, these are not mentioned as prayer days, yet I presume that this arose from your taking it for granted I should understand they were. But if in any place they be not, I earnestly entreat they may: for at such times there can be no difficulty in getting a congregation. I hope likewise, that you are not wanting in due regard to those which are usually called *State* Holydays: and particularly, that if the public fast, which hath been appointed these two last years, should be continued (as we have but too much reason to apprehend there will be need) I beg you will endeavour, not only to bring your parishioners to church on that occasion; but move them to such inward humiliation for their own sins, and such fervency of prayer for this most corrupt and wicked nation, as may avert, if it be possible, the just judgments of God which so visibly threaten us.

You must have understood, Brethren, in all you have heard, that I am not exhorting you to promote in your parishes a mere form of godliness without the power. Outward observances, by whatever authority appointed, are only valuable in proportion as they proceed from a good heart, and become means of edification and grace. They are always to be reverently regarded, but never rested in: for persons may observe without the least benefit, what they cannot omit without great sin. The business of your parishioners therefore is, so to use the external part of religion, as to be inwardly improved by it in love to God and their fellow-creatures, and in moral self-government: and your business is to apply both your public and private diligence, that this happy end be effectually attained. You have under your care great numbers of poor creatures, living very laborious lives in this world, and depending almost intirely on you for their hopes of another. It is a noble employment to direct their behaviour and lighten their toils here, by precepts and motives which lead them on at the same time to happiness hereafter. You will be sure of their acknowledgments at least in proportion as you succeed in this work: but you will be rewarded by God in proportion as you endeavour it. Think not therefore, that I am laying burthens upon you, but only *stirring up your minds by way of remembrance*, and exhorting you so to watch for the souls of men as they *that must give account, that you may do it with joy and not with grief*. It is very little in my power either to increase or lessen your duty. Our blessed Master hath fixed it, you have undertaken it: and were I to release you from ever so great a part of it, I should only bring guilt on myself without acquitting you at all. The injunctions of the New Testament, infinitely stricter than any of

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men, would continue to bind you as firmly as ever. Take *heed therefore to the miniſtry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it.*

Having a ſubject of ſuch a nature to ſpeak to you upon, and being able to ſpeak to you in a body but once in three years, you muſt not wonder if I go ſomewhat beyond the bounds of a common diſcourſe. There are many other things, and very material ones, relating to you as pariſh miniſters, which I could have wiſhed to mention now: but I was willing to treat firſt of ſuch matters as belong more immediately to the worſhip of God. If it pleaſe him that I live to another viſitation, I ſhall in that proceed to the reſt. Permit me now to add but one word or two more upon a different ſubject and I have done.

Whilſt we are ſerving Chriſtianity here, with the advantage of a legal eſtabliſhment and maintenance, there are vaſt multitudes of our fellow-ſubjects in *America*, their Negro ſlaves, and the neighbouring *Indians*, amongſt whom the knowledge of God is taught, and the exerciſes of his worſhip ſupported, if at all, very imperfectly, and with great difficulty, by the Society for propagating the Goſpel: the income of which depends intirely on the voluntary contributions of good Chriſtians; and is now reduced ſo low, and burthened with ſuch a debt, that they find it neceſſary to propoſe, this next year, according to the powers of their charter and with his Majeſty's recommendatory letters, a general collection, which they have not had for above 20 years paſt, to enable them to go on. Application will probably not be made to every pariſh ſeparately. But I hope every miniſter will give this excellent deſign all the aſſiſtance in his power: ſuch, as can afford it, either by becoming ſtated contributors and members of the Society; or at leaſt by ſome occaſional benefaction in this time of need; and all, by recommending the caſe to ſuch of their people or acquaintance as they have reaſon to think will pay regard to it. If any perſon deſires a more particular acquaintance with the nature and uſefulneſs and preſent condition of this undertaking, I have given ſome account of theſe matters in a ſermon at their anniverſary meeting lately publiſhed by me, and ſhall be ready to give any of you farther information, who ſhall either now or hereafter apply to me for it, perſonally or by letter.

But I muſt not yet conclude, without mentioning alſo the Society for promoting Chriſtian knowledge: who are carrying on the ſame good work in the *Eaſt Indies*, which that for propagating the Goſpel is in the *Weſt*; and at the ſame time are promoting the cauſe of religion many ways here at home: particularly by ſelling at very low rates, Bibles, Common-Prayers, and numbers of other religious books, chiefly of ſmall ſizes, for the uſe of the poor. This they alſo are ſupported in by voluntary benefactions: to which whoever is able to contribute, will do a very good work: and whoever can only purchaſe a few of their books for the uſe of his pariſhioners, ſhall have both my beſt aſſiſtance in it, and my hearty thanks for it.

I do not mean at all in ſpeaking of theſe things to preſcribe to you the methods of your charity: but only to lay before you two very deſerving ones, which may poſſibly have eſcaped the notice of ſome of you; and to endeavour, that the cauſe of our Lord and Maſter may be ſerved in as many ways as it can: for you muſt be ſenſible how very great need

there

there is that none be neglected. By zealously making use of such as are presented to us, we may possibly be of much more service to others than we expect: but we shall be sure of doing infinite service to ourselves. And *may God stir up the wills of all his faithful people, that they plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of him be plenteously rewarded through Jesus Christ our Lord* (*a*).

(*a*) Collect for the 25th Sunday after Trinity.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD,

In the YEAR 1747.

Reverend Brethren,

I CANNOT ſpeak to you thus aſſembled, without congratulating you in the firſt place on the happy ſuppreſſion of that unnatural rebellion, which, ſince we met laſt, hath threatened our religion and liberties. Nor will either my duty, or my inclination, ſuffer me to omit returning you my heartieſt thanks, for the unanimous zeal, you expreſſed againſt it; and I doubt not were ready to expreſs, even before the exhortation to do ſo, which I was directed to ſend you, and which you received with ſo obliging a regard. Your behaviour, and that of the whole Clergy, on this trying occaſion, hath abounded with ſuch proofs of loyalty and affection to the government, under which God's

God's mercy hath placed and continued us, that his Majesty hath declared, he shall ever have the strongest sense of what you have done for the support of his throne, and gladly shew his gratitude by any proper methods of extending his royal favour to you and to religion. It may be hoped also, that our fellow-subjects will remember, what they owe to our long-despised and reproached labours: and learn, how essential a part of the church of *England* is of our present establishment. Indeed, not only the more candid of those, who thought amiss of us, have acknowledged our merit now; but the *lying lips* are *put to silence, which disdainfully and despitefully* spoke *against us* (*a*). And let us go on, Brethren, to express the warmest and most prudent zeal for what we doubly felt the value of, when we feared to lose it: and so behave in this and all respects, that *they who are of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us* (*b*). For however imperfectly men may do us justice, our reward from God is sure.

I have recommended to you, in the course of my former visitations, various parts of your duty: first in general, as Ministers of the Gospel in a vicious and profane age; then more particularly, as Incumbents of your respective parishes. Under this latter head, I began with what immediately relates to the worship of God: and now proceed to another point, of a temporal nature indeed, as it may seem, but several ways connected with spirituals; the care you are bound to take of the incomes arising from your benefices. These endowments are sacred to the purposes of piety and charity: and it is neither lawful for us to employ them unsuitably ourselves, nor to let any part of them become a prey to the avarice of others. The few that may appear to be larger than was necessary, are in truth but needful encouragements to the breeding up of youth for holy-orders. And were they lessened, either an insufficient number would be destined to that service, or too many of them would be of the lowest rank, unable to bear the expence of acquiring due knowledge, and unlikely to be treated with due regard. Besides, the most plentiful of these revenues may be well applied to religious uses: and therefore, as they have been dedicated, ought to continue appropriated, to them. But the generality of them, it will surely be owned, are small enough: and a very great part left so utterly incompetent, by the ravages of former times, that the little which remains, demands our strictest care now. For, without it, poor incumbents will not be able to maintain themselves decently, much less to exercise hospitality and charity towards others. Yet on these things both their spirit and their success in doing their duty greatly depend. And therefore how indifferent soever any of us may have cause to be about our own interests; we ought to consider ourselves as trustees for our successors. We all blame our predecessors, if they have not transmitted the patrimony of the church undiminished into our hands. Let us think then what others hereafter will say of us, and with what reason, if we are guilty of the same fault; and give away for ever, what we should count it sacrilege in any one else to take from us.

Indeed some persons imagine or pretend that the only danger is of the Clergy's encroaching on the properties of the Laity, not neglecting their own.

(*a*) Psal. xxxi. 20. (*b*) Tit. ii. 8.

own. And we acknowledge there have been times, when that was the danger. But they are long past: and God forbid we should desire to revive them. Placing excessive wealth in the hands of ecclesiastics, would both endanger others and corrupt them: as the examples of past ages have too fully shewn. But the parochial Clergy of those times, instead of being the authors of this error, were the heaviest sufferers by it. And to renew the attempt in these days, would be folly equal to its wickedness: of which we should so certainly and immediately be made sensible, indeed we are so universally sensible of it already, that there can be no need of giving cautions on this head. All we wish for is, the unmolested enjoyment of what clearly belongs to us, and a reasonable allowance of what is confessedly requisite for us, in order to attain the only ends of our institution, the present and future happiness of mankind. In how many and sad instances we fail of possessing in peace such a competent provision, I need not say. Let us all behave under whatever usage we receive, with the innocence and the prudence, which our Master enjoins. But we shall be wanting in both, if we wrong ourselves and those that will come after us, by improper voluntary diminutions of what is allotted for our support: which, through inconsiderateness and indolence, hath been often done: designedly, I would hope, but seldom. And we may be guilty of it, either at coming into our benefices, or during our incumbency on them, or when we quit them: to which three heads I shall speak in their order.

Yet indeed, as I am now directing my discourse to persons, most of them already possessed of benefices, it may seem too late to give cautions respecting the time of entering upon them. But all who have acted right then, will at least hear with pleasure their conduct approved. If any have acted wrong; which I do not know, that any of you have; on being shewn it, they may repent of it, they may consider how far they can undo what they have done, or prevent the bad consequences that are likely to flow from it. And both sorts may be influenced more strongly, to take no improper steps on any future occasion, and to warn their friends against such errors.

I proceed therefore to say, that benefices ought neither to be given, nor accepted, with any other condition or promise, than that of doing our duty in relation to them. This engagement is always understood, whether it be expressed or not: and no other should either be required or complied with. For when Bishops, originally the sole patrons, to encourage the endowment of parishes, gave others a right of presenting fit persons to them; or that right was confirmed or granted by the civil power: they must be supposed to give it only to be exercised for the future, as it had been before: when whoever was appointed to any station in the church, enjoyed the benefit of all he was appointed to, so long as he behaved well. And therefore attempting to bring the Clergy into a worse condition, is usurpation: and submitting to the attempt is encouraging usurpation.

Yet there is a great difference between the things to which our submission may be demanded. Some are grosly and obviously unlawful. If for instance any person, in order to obtain a benefice, promises to give up such a part of the income, to connive at such a lessening of it, to accept

cept of such a composition for it, to allow such a pension or make such a payment to any one out of it: these things are in effect the same with laying down beforehand such a sum for it: which is the nearest approach, excepting that of bribing for holy orders, to his sin, who thought the *gifts of God might be purchased with money*, and was answered, *Thy money perish with thee* (*c*). Nor can it take away, if it alleviate the guilt, that the payment or pension, thus reserved, is allotted to uses really charitable. Still it is buying, what ought to be freely bestowed: this forced charity must disable a man from voluntary almsgiving, in proportion to its amount: and one compliance in a seemingly favourable instance, will only make way for another in a more doubtful case, and so on without end. Another excuse I hope nobody will plead; that obligations of this kind may be safely entered into, since they are notoriously void. For we can never be at liberty to make an agreement, merely because it is so bad a one, that neither law nor conscience will let us keep it.

But supposing a person binds himself to his patron, only that he will quit his benefice, when required: even this he ought not to do. For he hath no right to promise it; and no power to perform the promise. Whoever undertakes the care of a living, must continue that care till the law deprives him of it, or his superior releases him from it (*d*). Therefore he can only subject himself to a penalty which another may exact at pleasure, unless he doth what of himself he is not able to do, and knows not whether he shall obtain permission to do. Can this be prudent? Can it be fit? If he pay the penalty, he gives money to the patron, though not for his first possession of the benefice, yet for his continuance in it: besides that he must either distress himself, or defraud religion and charity of what he ought to have bestowed on them. If then to avoid paying it, he begs leave to resign; he puts his Bishop under very unreasonable difficulties: who by refusing his request, may bring great inconveniences on the poor man: and by granting it, may lose a minister from a parish, where he was useful, and ought to have continued: may expose himself to the many bad consequences of having an improper successor presented to him. At least he will encourage a practice undoubtedly wrong and hurtful in the main, whatever it may be in the instance before him. And why are not these sufficient grounds for a denial; since whatever the incumbent suffers by it, he hath brought upon himself?

Besides, in bonds to resign, where no condition is expressed, some unfair intention almost always lies hid. For if it were an honest one, why should it not be plainly mentioned, and both sides cleared from imputations? Assuredly unless persons are to a strange degree inconsiderate, this would be done if it could. The true meaning therefore too commonly is, to enslave the incumbent to the will and pleasure of his patron, whatever it shall happen at any time to be. So that, if he demands his legal dues; if he is not subservient to the schemes, political or whatever they are, which he is required to promote; if he reproves such and such vices; if he preaches, or does not preach, such and such doctrines; if

(*c*) Acts viii. 7.

(*d*) See Stillingfleet on Bonds of Resignation, in the third volume of his Works, p. 731.

if he stands up for charity and justice to any one when he is forbidden: the terror of resignation, or the penalty of the bond, may immediately be shaken over his head. How shamefully beneath the dignity of a Clergyman is such a situation as this! How grievously doth it tempt a man to unbecoming, and even unlawful, compliances! What suspicions doth it bring upon him of being unduly influenced, when he is not! Or however he may escape himself, what a snare may his example prove to his poor brethren of weaker minds, or less established characters!

To prevent these mischiefs, both the ancient laws of other churches, and those of our own (*e*) still in force, have strictly forbidden such contracts (*f*). Particularly the council of *Oxford*, held in 1222, prescribed an oath against *Simony*, for so it is entitled, by which every clerk shall swear at his institution, that he hath entered into no compact in order to be presented (*g*). And Archbishop *Courtney*, in his injuctions to all the Bishops of his province in 1391, condemns those, as guilty of Simony, who, before presentation, engage to resign when required (*h*); and appoints all persons instituted to be sworn (*i*), that they have not given, to obtain presentation, either oath, or bond to resign (*k*). Again, the Constitutions of Cardinal *Pole*, when Archbishop, in 1555, censure, as being simoniacal, all bargains or promises for procuring of benefices; and assert that benefices ought to be given without any condition, and order that the person presented shall swear, he hath neither promised, nor given, nor exchanged, nor lent, nor deposited, nor remitted, &c. any thing, nor confirmed any thing given before (*l*). And a convocation held

(*e*) *Stillingfleet* in his letter about bonds of resignation in Miscell. Discourses, p. 42. &c. shews several sorts of contracts that are allowed; and objects not against trusts and confidences; [as indeed I have been assured that Dr. *Bentley* held a living in trust for the Bishop's son] nor against what is done, in consideration of service, without a compact; but only against a legal obligation on the party, before his presentation, to perform such a condition; and if he do not, to resign.

(*f*) The Council of *Westminster*, 1138, appoints that when any one receives investiture from the Bishop, he shall swear that he hath neither given nor promised any thing for his benefice. Spelm. vol. 2. p. 39. apud Gibson Cod. p. 845.

(*g*) The words are, *quod propter præsentationem illam nec promiserit nec dederit aliquid præsentanti, nec aliquam propter hoc inierit pactionem*: where *hoc* most naturally refers to *negotium præsentationis* understood.

See *Conc. Oxon.* c. 18. in *Wilkins*, vol. 1. p. 588. and *Lyndwood*, L. 2. *de Jurejurando*, cap. *præsenti*, in *Wake*'s charge 1709. p. 34. and *Stillingfleet* on bonds, &c. p. 721. and letter about bonds, p. 39.

(*h*) But it appears, by the preamble, that this was designed only against putting it thus in the patron's power to dispose of the profits, or turn the incumbents out, and give pluralities of livings to such as he favoured.

(*i*) *Wilkins*, vol. 3. p. 216. *Wake*, p. 35, 36.

(*k*) The injunctions of *Ed.* 6. in 1547, appoint that such as buy benefices, or come to them by fraud or deceit, shall be deprived, &c. And such as sell them, or by any colour bestow them for their own gain or profit, shall lose their right of presenting for that time. *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

(*l*) *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 124, 125.

held under him, two years after, complaining that, of late years, perſons have procured benefices *et prælaturas*, [pariſh-prieſts are *prælati* ſee *Index* to *Lyndwood* in *prælatus*:] not only vacant, but likely to become ſo, *non precibus & obſequiis tantum, ſed & opportis muneribus*, ſo that *electionum ſaluberrimæ formæ quæ per canones liberæ eſſe deberent, vel fraudibus obtenebratæ ſunt, vel ad compromiſſi neceſſitatem redactæ*: directs, that Biſhops prevent theſe things, and take care by themſelves and their officers, eſpecially *quos in prælatorum electionibus tanquam directores & conſultores inter regie contingit*, that *fraudes & pactiones* be excluded: and if any one have got, *per pecuniæ & munerum foedus, prælaturam vel beneficium eccleſiaſticum*, he be puniſhed (*m*). It is indeed true, that the great evil, at which theſe ſeveral directions were levelled, was giving or promiſing *money* for preſentations, or receiving it for reſignations (*n*). And therefore it may be argued, that where no money is directly paid, or taken, or covenanted for, nothing illegal is done. But the opinions delivered, and the judgments pronounced, by the Canon lawyers, plainly extend the prohibition to whatever is equivalent to money (*o*). And it hath been urged that by how much ſoever a perſons leſſens the value of a benefice to himſelf by a bond of reſignation to the patron in order to procure it, as unqueſtionably ſuch a bond doth leſſen it, ſo much in effect he pays to obtain it (*p*). Or allowing, that in ſome caſes this doth not hold: yet nothing will prevent unlawful contracts in many caſes, but prohibiting in all caſes abſolute contracts to reſign upon demand; which therefore the abovementioned Conſtitutions have rightly done. And as the oaths, preſcribed in them, expreſs the denial of having made ſuch a contract; the oath preſcribed at this time muſt naturally be underſtood to imply the ſame thing. For its being leſs explicit is no proof, that, what in common acceptation came under the name *Simoniacal* before, doth not come under it ſtill.

However, we muſt acknowledge, that bonds of reſignation on demand have been declared by the temporal judges valid, and not ſimoniacal

(*m*) *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 165.

(*n*) The tenor of them ſhews this. Particularly the corrupt reſignations were to get penſions out of benefices, or money for quitting them, or exchanges gainful to the patron or his friends. The *Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de renunciatione*, cap. 3. forbids only reſignations for conſideration of gain. See *Wake*, p. 48. And Tit. *de admittendis ad Beneficia Eccleſiaſtica*. c. 24. only obliges a perſon at inſtitution to ſwear that he neither hath given nor promiſed, nor will give, any thing. And Tit. *de beneficiis conferendis* forbids only compacts by which benefices are leſſened. See *Wake*, p. 36. who goes too far in ſaying the words are general againſt all manner of contracts or promiſes. The preamble of the oath in Can. 40. condemns only *buying and ſelling* of benefices. The Latin is *mundinatio*. But *Stillingfleet* ſaith, p. 719, this takes in any benefit accruing to the patron, becauſe *nomine emptionis & venditionis intelligitur omnis contractus non gratuitus*.

(*o*) See *Wake*, p. 18, 24. *Stillingfleet*, p. 719, 722. and letter about bonds, p. 46. &c. The injunctions of *Ed.* 6. forbid patrons ſelling livings, or by any colour beſtowing them for their own gain and profit. *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 7, 8.

(*p*) *Stillingfleet*, p. 722.

niacal (*q*). And they are indeed the proper judges, whether they are such by the common and statute law. But whether the ecclesiastical law permits them, is not so clearly within their cognizance. Indeed all questions about this crime seem to have been entirely out of it (*r*), till an act was made, 31 Eliz. c. 6. which, *for the avoiding of simony and corruption in presentations and collations*, inflicts penalties on those who shall either give or procure them for any sum of money, profit or benefit; or for any promise, bond, or assurance of it, directly or indirectly: but at the same time allows the ecclesiastical laws to punish the same offences which the act doth, in the same manner as they did before. Now making these provisions is not saying, that nothing shall be deemed simoniacal by the spiritual judge, but what the temporal judge shall think is forbidden by this act (*s*). And therefore, though the latter may apprehend absolute bonds of resignation to be consistent with the statute; yet the former may justly apprehend them to be inconsistent with the constitutions of the church, which we ought to obey; and with the oath against simony,

(*q*) *Stillingfleet*, p. 735. &c. *Wake*, p. 49. &c. Indeed *Stillingfleet*, p. 735. says that the court, having given judgment for such a bond in the case of *Jones* and *Lawrence*, 8 *Jac.* 1. held, seven years after, *viz.* 15 *Jac.* 1. in the case of *Paschal* and *Clerk*, that it was simony within the statute; and he cites *Noy*, 22. for it. But *Wake* mentions not this: and *Watson*, c. 5. p. 40. says it does not appear by the roll that there was such a trial; and if there was, it is of no great authority, nor hath been regarded since.

(*r*) See *Wake*, p. 39, 50. The preamble of 5 *Eliz.* c. 23. compared with § 13. sufficiently intimates that simony is an offence appertaining merely to the jurisdiction and determination of the ecclesiastical courts and judges. Yet *Stillingfleet*, p. 718. cites from *Croke*, *Car.* 361. the judges as saying, in the case of *Mackaller* and *Todderick*, that the common law before 31 *Eliz.* took notice of a simoniacal contract. But *Coke* in *Cawdrie*'s case, 5th Rep. fol. 8, 9. as cited by *Wake*, p. 50. puts simony among the crimes the conusance whereof belongs not to the common but ecclesiastical law, and repeats the same. p. 40. And *Croke*, fol. 789. says that the judges in the case of *Baker*, 42 *Eliz.* held that it appertains to the spiritual court to determine what is simony, and not to this court to meddle therewith.

(*s*) *Stillingfleet*, p. 718. saith "the words simony or simoniacal contract "are never mentioned in this statute." And *Wake*, p. 50. cites *Noy* Rep. fol. 25. as saying that "in it there is no word of simony; because by that "means the common law would have been judge what should have been simo-"ny, and what not." And *Stillingfleet*, ibid. allows, that if the word had been there, the judges would have had sufficient reason to declare what was simony and what not. Now in truth that part of the act which relates to the present affair begins thus. "And for the avoiding of simony and corruption "in presentations, collations, and donations of and to benefices, &c. and in "admissions, institutions, and inductions to the same, be it further enacted, "that, if any person, &c." This may seem to imply that no other things but those mentioned afterwards were simony: otherwise the act would provide only for avoiding some sorts of simony. Accordingly *Gibson* Cod. p. 839. and *Stillingfl.* Pref. p. 714. and Disc. p. 718. think it only means to punish some particular remarkable sorts specified in it: and *Wake* agrees that it abrogates no ecclesiastical law. And this agrees with what is observed here, note (*n*). But still the judges, after this act, thought that judging of simony did not belong to them. See here, note (*r*).

ſimony, which ought to be taken in the ſenſe of thoſe who originally enjoined and ſtill adminiſter it; and not to have its meaning changed on the ſuppoſed authority of their opinions, who neither have undertaken to interpret it, nor, if the judgment of their predeceſſors be allowed, have a right to do it.

At leaſt refuſing ſuch bonds, on account of the oath, muſt be the ſafeſt ſide: eſpecially, as the greateſt divines of this church have declared againſt them; and I think none for them. Though indeed, were the oath out of the queſtion; the bonds are apparently ſo miſchievous, as to be for that reaſon alone ſufficiently unlawful. It may be ſaid, that if the patron attempts to make ill uſe of them, equity will relieve the incumbent. But I have ſhewn you, that their conſequences muſt be very bad, whatever uſe the patron makes of them. And beſides, how expenſive, indeed how uncertain, this pretended relief will be; how ſeldom therefore it will or can be ſought for; and how much better on all accounts it is to avoid the need of it; every one muſt perceive.

But let us now ſuppoſe, that a ſeemingly reaſonable condition were expreſſed in theſe bonds: for inſtance, to reſign when ſuch a relation or friend of the patron's comes to the age of being preſented, who perhaps hath been educated with a view to the benefice vacant (*t*). Now I do not ſay but a perſon may very lawfully, and ſometimes very charitably form an intention of reſigning at ſuch a period, if circumſtances then ſhould make it proper; and may alſo ſignify ſuch intention beforehand. But if he bind himſelf to it abſolutely, beſides the diſtruſt of him, which requiring this implies, perhaps when the time comes, the young perſon will refuſe to take the benefice, or the patron to give it him: and yet the incumbent muſt continue in perfect dependance thenceforward: for his caſe is become the ſame, as if his bond had been originally without any condition. Beſides, this contrivance for procuring an immediate vacancy at ſuch a particular time, encourages perſons, even of low rank, to purchaſe patronages, ſeparate from the manors on which they were anciently appendant, merely to ſerve intereſted purpoſes. And the generality of theſe, inſtead of conſidering their right of preſentation as a ſpiritual truſt, to be conſcientiouſly diſcharged, will of courſe look on it as

(*t*) *Stillingfleet*, p. 716. ſuppoſes this to be the intent, with which an abſolute bond is required, and ſaith, it is a caſe, wherein a bond may be thought leſs more reaſonable than in others. But he expreſſes no poſitive approbation of it, nor doth he mention there giving a bond with this condition expreſſed. But, in p. 736. he hath that caſe in view, where he ſaith, "that there may be a lawful truſt in ſuch a caſe, I do not queſtion:" yet adds, "but whether the perſon who takes this truſt can enter into a bond and take the oath, I very much queſtion." And *Wake*, though in p. 22. he names this as one of the moſt favourable caſes that can be deſired, condemns it notwithſtanding, as an obligation, which the patron has no right to impoſe, nor the clerk any power to enter into, as contrary to the Canons, and the authority of the Biſhop, and the oath of yielding him canonical obedience, and of doing what in the clerk lies to maintain the right of his ſee; but he doth not ſay it is contrary to the oath againſt ſimony.

as a temporal inheritance, which since they have bought, they may fairly sell, at any time, in any manner, for what they can: or at best merely as the means of providing a maintenance for such persons as they please: who therefore, unless they will be cast off intirely by their friends, must, when they are of age, however unfit for the cure of souls, however averse from it, submit to be presented, and perhaps cannot be rejected. Then further, in proportion as this custom prevails, benefices, and particularly the more valuable ones, coming to be of a temporary and precarious tenure, contrary to what they were intended; persons of character and abilities, and a proper spirit, will not so often care to take them. Or if they do, they will not usually, indeed it cannot so well be expected they should, either defend the rights of them, or exercise hospitality and charity upon them, in the same manner, as if they were to hold them for life. Nor will the people, generally speaking, respect those who come in thus, and must behave, and go out again thus, as they ought always to respect their ministers.

But still persons may plead that whatever is objected against other engagements from incumbents to patrons, yet if they engage only to be constantly resident, to do faithfully the whole duty, which the laws of the church enjoin them, or perhaps somewhat more; this must be allowable. And doubtless it is, provided the engagement be only a sincere promise of acting thus, as far as they can with reasonable convenience. Nay if they bind themselves by a legal tie, to do any thing, which either belongs of course to their benefice, or hath by ancient custom been annexed to it, learned and judicious authors justify them (*u*). But covenanting thus to do even a laudable action, as teaching school or prescribing to the sick, if their predecessors were not, without a covenant, obliged to it, hath been held unlawful and simoniacal (*w*): because it is promising to save, which upon the matter is promising to give, so much money either to the patron, or however to those for whom he interests himself. And indeed, though persons were to promise only what in conscience they are antecedently bound to; yet if they tie themselves, either to do this, or to resign; whenever they fail in any one part of it, as to be sure they will in some, sooner or later, though perhaps very innocently; supposing the rigour of their bond insisted upon, (as who can say it will not?) they are at the mercy of the patron ever after. He becomes their ordinary; and is vested, by their imprudence, with a much greater authority, than the Bishop hath: an authority of restraining their liberty, where the wisdom of the church hath not restrained it (*x*): an authority of proceeding summarily; and depriving them, for whatever failures he hath thought fit to insert in the bond, without delay and without appeal: and this authority he may exercise ever after, when he pleases, to just the same purposes, as if they had covenanted at first to resign when requested.

Still, without question, many good persons have both required and given bonds of resignation of these latter sorts: and in many cases, as no

(*u*) *Wake*'s Charge, 1709, p. 24. *Stillingfleet*'s Letter, p. 54.
(*w*) *Wake*, p. 18. (*x*) *Wake*, p. 25.

no harm at all hath been intended, ſo no particular harm hath been done by them. But in ſo many more there hath, and it is ſo neceſſary to go by general rules; and one ſpecious exception doth ſo conſtantly produce others that are a little leſs ſo; till at laſt the moſt pernicious practices creep in (*y*), that there is abundant reaſon to refuſe making any contracts whatſoever in order to obtain preſentation: and more eſpecially there is reaſon to refuſe them, on account of their miſchievous influence on the revenues of the church: which was the immediate occaſion of my ſpeaking of them now; though I thought it by no means proper to omit the other arguments againſt them.

Perhaps it may be ſaid: if patrons will have bonds of reſignation, what can clergymen do? I anſwer, if clergymen will not give them, how can patrons help themſelves? They muſt preſent without them, or their right muſt lapſe to the Biſhop, who will. It may indeed be replied, that though one perſon rejects the offer, another will accept it: and therefore he may as well. But this would equally be an excuſe for the worſt of wrong compliances in every kind; and conſequently it is an excuſe for none. Beſides, it may happen, that by arguing with patrons againſt ſuch contracts, they may be convinced; and learn ſo juſt an eſteem for thoſe, who refuſe them decently and reſpectfully, as not only to preſent them with double pleaſure, but do them afterwards greater ſervices, than they intended them before. At leaſt whatever clergyman behaves in ſo worthy and exemplary a manner, will aſſuredly, if the reſt of his conduct be ſuitable to that part, either by the care of God's Providence, be raiſed in the world ſome other way; or, by the influence of God's Spirit, be made eaſy and happy in his preſent ſituation.

But it may be objected further, that Biſhops argue with an ill grace againſt bonds at preſentation, while they themſelves take them at inſtitution. And it muſt be owned, that in ſeveral Dioceſes, particularly that of *Lincoln* out of which this was taken, and of *Peterborough* which was alſo taken from thence (*z*), there is an ancient and immemorial cuſtom, (cuſtoms, you are ſenſible, not being the ſame every where;) for the clerk preſented to indemnify the Biſhop and his officers from all ſuits at law for inſtituting him. And accordingly in this Dioceſe, bonds appear to have been taken for that purpoſe at all inſtitutions for 120 years paſt: within which time, there have been nearly, if not quite, 700 given, that are now lying in the regiſtry: and hence we may preſume the practice hath been the ſame from the erection of the See. The original of it probably was, that a commiſſion of enquiry being formerly ſent out, as old regiſters prove, upon every vacancy (*a*) alledged, to certify

(*y*) *Wake*, p. 25.

(*z*) In *Lincoln* Dioceſe they are taken only when the Biſhop hath any the leaſt ſuſpicion about the patronage: in *Peterborough* and *Litchfield* always: in *Canterbury* whenever a new patron preſents: in *Gloucester* and *Exeter* they were taken till the time of the preſent Biſhops.

(*a*) That it was on every vacancy appears from Archbiſhop *Stratford*'s Conſtitution, *Sæva, A. D.* 1342. in *Lindw.* p. 222. and from *Lindw.* p. 217. on

certify the Bishop, whether the living was really vacant, who was at present the true patron, and whatever else it was requisite he should know in order to institute: and the expence of this commission, and of the proceedings upon it, being of necessity considerable to the clerk, who bore it (*b*); the cheaper method of a bond from him to save the Bishop harmless, was substituted in its room. And a further reason might be, that, the Bishop having 28 days allowed him, after the presentation was tendered, to consider and inform himself, whether he should institute the clerk presented or not; the clerk was willing and desirous, rather to indemnify the Bishop, if he would consent to institute him sooner, than to bear the inconvenience, and perhaps charges, of waiting to the end of that time. At least the only design of this bond was and is, that if the clerk's title to institution be questionable, the Bishop may not suffer by granting it. Now a covenant for this end is surely a very lawful one, and subject to none of the mischiefs, which, I have shewn you, attend bonds to patrons. Nor was any constitution of church or state ever pointed against it: nor I believe hath any harm ever happened from it.

But I must own too, that there is another condition added to these bonds, that the clerk shall resign his benefice if required by the Bishop, in case any controversy arise, whether his institution be rightful. But this provision is, in the bond, expressed to be made only for the same purpose with the former, the indemnification of the Bishop: and the penalty of the bond is so moderated, as to serve that purpose and no other. Accordingly I have not heard, that any one person hath ever scrupled, in point of conscience, to enter into this engagement; the meaning of it being only, that if he prove to have no right, he shall quit: nor indeed, that any one hath found cause to scruple it in point of prudence. For as you may be sure the fulfilling it would never be required without necessity; so I believe it hath never yet been required at all. That neither the intention of this covenant was bad, nor the reasons for it contemptible, you will readily allow, on being told, that it began to be inserted constantly in this Diocese, at the time when our present most Reverend Metropolitan was placed over it: which seeming innovation was indeed only conforming more exactly to the old example of our mother See (*c*). But still as it is as a condition, the insisting on which, in some cases, might have bad effects, that were not then foreseen (*d*); though in such cases it probably never would be insisted on, as

on Archbishop *Peckham*'s Constitution *per nostrum provinciam* verb. *Inquisitionem*, and from Bishop *Gibson*'s Codex, p. 857.

(*b*) It appears from the above Constitution of *Stratford*, that the clerk paid for the commission, and therefore of course for all that was done upon it.

(*c*) I have seen a bond from the Bishop of *Lincoln*'s registry with this covenant in it, printed in the time of *Jac.* 2. and the Bishop informs me the covenant hath been used ever since the restoration: how much sooner he knows not.

(*d*) *e. g.* A suit may be begun which would have proved ineffectual. Yet if the Incumbent resign, the expence of a fresh presentation and institution

as it never hath: I have determined, with his Grace's intire approbation, to omit it for the future.

And in every thing, I ſhall not only be careful to make your burthens no heavier, but if it can be ſhewn me, that I am able to do it, with juſtice and equity, I ſhall be glad to make them lighter. The fees taken of the Clergy in this Dioceſe, whether at inſtitutions or viſitations, are not varied in any one article from thoſe, which were returned to, and not diſapproved by, a committee of Parliament in the time of my predeceſſor. They are the ſame, as he informs me, with thoſe taken in the time of his predeceſſor. Nor have I hitherto found proof, though I have inquired with ſome care, that they have been increaſed at all materially ſince the Biſhoprick was founded (*e*). Thoſe of viſitation I am ſure have not in the leaſt. And yet the diminution of the value of money in that interval hath reduced the ſame ſum in name and quantity, to perhaps not a fourth of what it was in effect and uſe: on which account proportionable augmentations of fees have been made, I believe, in all temporal courts and offices; and ancient rules to the contrary have been juſtly deemed obſolete, the reaſons of them having ceaſed. So that where this hath not been done, or not to any conſiderable degree, there is cauſe to render to all their dues with great ſatisfaction.

And here I muſt take the freedom of ſpeaking to you about ſome dues owing to myſelf, ſynodals and procurations. The former are an ancient acknowledgment of honour and ſubjection, reſerved by the Biſhops of the Weſtern church, as long ago as when they ſettled their own ſhare of the tithes, in each pariſh, to be the future property of the ſeveral incumbents: and it took its name from being uſually paid at the ſynodal meetings. Now ſo ſmall a tribute, eſpecially if conſidered as a quit rent for ſo great a conceſſion, can ſurely never be thought a hardſhip. The other, procurations, are alſo a payment ſeveral hundred years old, ſucceeding in the place of a much more expenſive obligation, that of entertaining the Biſhop and his attendants, when he viſited each pariſh. Neither of them hath been increaſed ſince their firſt beginning: the right to both is indiſputably legal: and as I am ſworn to maintain all the rights of my See, I promiſe myſelf none of you will force me to do it in a way, that cannot be more diſagreeable to you, than it will to me. If any one pleads, that complying with the demand of ſo trifling a ſum will be inconvenient to him, it ſhall be more than returned him. If any one doubts, whether it is incumbent on him or not: his reaſons for the doubt, when ever he lays them before me, ſhall be impartially conſidered, and allowed their full weight. But I hope no perſon will think it either decent or juſt, merely to refuſe, without aſſigning a ſufficient cauſe: and diſuſe for ſome years is not ſufficient, in a matter, like this, of

ſtitution will at leaſt be neceſſary for him: but indeed the patron may preſent another: and in the caſe of alternate patronage, another will preſent.

(*e*) *i. e.* Allowing each of the new inſtruments that are required, to coſt as much as each of the old ones.

of common right. Moſt of my Clergy have very punctually ſhewn me this little mark of their regard, amongſt many greater. Whether any here preſent have omitted it, I do not know. But I truſt you will all have the candour to think I have mentioned it, not from any wrong or mean motive, but becauſe I apprehend it my duty, and have not the leaſt doubt of your willingneſs to be informed or reminded of every part of yours.

And with this kind of digreſſion I muſt conclude for the preſent. If God prolong my life and health to another opportunity, I ſhall proceed to the remainder of the ſubject. In the mean time, I heartily pray him to direct and bleſs you in all things.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD,

In the YEAR 1750.

Reverend Brethren,

IN the courſe of my former viſitations of this Dioceſe, I have recommended to you various parts of your duty, as Miniſters of the Goſpel in general, and of your reſpective pariſhes in particular. After things, more immediately and intirely of ſpiritual concern, I proceeded, in my laſt Charge, to the care, that you are bound to take of your temporalties; with which you are intruſted, partly for the ſervice of religion in your own times, partly for your ſucceſſors, as your predeceſſors were for you: a truſt, which if any of them broke, or neglected, you are too ſenſible they did ill, to be excuſable to your own minds, if you imitate them. And dividing this care into the behaviour,

haviour, that is requisite at your coming into livings, during your incumbency on them, and when you are to quit them: I went through the first of these heads; giving you proper cautions, more especially against making any contract or promise inconsistent with the oath, then required of you, or prejudicial to your own benefices, or the common interests of the Clergy. Therefore I now go on to the second, the vigilance, with which you ought each to superintend the revenues and possessions of your church, whilst you continue minister of it.

I have too much cause, in every thing, to be sensible of my own unfitness to direct: but, in several articles, relating to this point, I am peculiarly unqualified: having little experience in them, and a yet less share of the proper abilities and turn of mind for them. However, I ought not to omit being of such use to you, as I can. There may be those amongst you, who are either still more unacquainted with these matters, or at least have not considered them all in the same light: as you must have observed, that very obvious instances, both of wisdom and duty, escape the attention of many, till they are pointed out to them. And a discourse, neither complete, nor possibly free from mistakes, may notwithstanding do service, by exciting persons to think on the subject, more than they have done hitherto.

Your care, in respect to this subject, consists of two parts: recovering what may be unduly withheld from your church, and preserving what is left.

It is very unhappy, that so troublesome and invidious an employment, as the former, should ever be made necessary: which yet it hath too often been. Glebe lands have been blended with temporal estates; and pretences set up, that only such a yearly rent, far inferior to the real value, is payable from them. Tithes and other dues have been denied; under false colours of exemptions in some cases, and of modus's in many. Every unjust plea admitted makes way for more. And thus what was given for the support of the Clergy in all future times, is decreasing continually; and becoming less sufficient, as it goes down to them. The Laity themselves, if they would reflect, must see, that they have by no means any cause to rejoice in this. For, probably few of them in proportion will be gainers by what we lose: but the whole body of them, wherever the provision made for us becomes incompetent, must either make another at their own expence, or be deprived in a great measure of the good influences of our office, with respect to this world and the next. But whatever they are, we ourselves cannot surely fail to be deeply concerned at the ill aspect, which these encroachments bear towards religion in ages to come. Whoever is indifferent about it, shews himself very unworthy of what he enjoys from the liberality of ages preceding. And whoever is grieved at it, will set himself to consider, not how he can augment the patrimony of the church, where it is already plentiful; or any where, by dishonourable methods: (you are very sensible, what injustice and folly there would be in such attempts) but how he can retrieve any part of it, which is illegally or unequitably seized and detained.

Now here the foundation of all must be, a diligent and impartial inquiry into the right of the case: for it would be absurd to deceive ourselves;

ſelves; and unfair to demand of others what we are not well perſuaded is our due. Therefore to avoid both, we ſhould aſk the opinion of ſkilful and upright adviſers. If this be in our favour, the next proper ſteps will be, laying our claim, with the proofs of it, ſo far as prudence will permit, before the perſon concerned; repreſenting it, in a friendly and ſerious manner, as an affair, in which his conſcience is intereſted; procuring the aſſiſtance of thoſe, who have weight with him, if we know any ſuch; taking the opportunity of his being, at any time, in a more conſiderate diſpoſition than ordinary; preſſing him, not to rely too much on his own judgment, where it may ſo eaſily be biaſſed: yet forbidding him to rely on ours, if he would; and begging him to conſult ſome other worthy able perſon: offering to pitch on one or more, if circumſtances perſuade to it, whoſe determination ſhall conclude us both: and intreating him to ſay, whether he would not think this, in any other caſe, very reaſonable. If ſtill he cannot prevail on himſelf to comply: we may endeavour to leſſen the difficulty, by propoſing to accept a ſmall payment, where none hath been made for ſome time: or a ſmall variation, where a cuſtomary payment is pleaded: in hopes, that either the deſire of enjoying, with ſome degree of good conſcience, the main of what he withholds now with a bad one; or, at leaſt, that of avoiding the coſt and hazard of a conteſt, may win him over.

If none of theſe methods (which too commonly happens) will operate, after a due ſeaſon allowed them for it; the only remaining remedy is an appeal to the law. But here I would be far from exciting any of you to plainly fruitleſs or over-dangerous attempts. I am very ſenſible, how unfavourable the times are to eccleſiaſtical pretenſions, how enormous the expences of legal proceedings, how ſmall the incomes of moſt benefices, how ſtrait the circumſtances of moſt clergymen: conſiderations, that one ſhould think would reſtrain perſons of any generoſity, nay of any compaſſion, from bearing hard upon them. But they ought not to be pleaded by any of us, to excuſe ourſelves from undertaking a neceſſary burthen; which perhaps we are as well able to ſupport, as any, who will be likely to come in our ſtead. I am ſenſible too, and would have you be ſo, that ſcarce any thing is a more effectual hindrance to our doing good amongſt our pariſhioners, than the character of being litigious; which many delight to give us: but with how little juſtice, in general, one ſingle obſervation amongſt ſeveral that might be alledged, will more than ſufficiently ſhew; that of 700 ſuits for tithes, brought by the clergy into the Court of Exchequer, which is only about one in 14 pariſhes, during the ſpace of 53 years, from the reſtoration to the year 1713, 600 were decided for them. It is true, our obtaining juſtice againſt any man, though in ever ſo clear a cauſe, is very apt to be reſented, by himſelf and his friends at leaſt, as grievous injuſtice. But uſing the previous amicable meaſures, which I have recommended, muſt in ſome degree prevent, either ſevere imputations upon us, or however the belief of them: and if not entirely, yet, by mildneſs, and prudence, we may certainly regain in time the reputation, we never deſerved to loſe. At leaſt our ſucceſſors will enjoy, free from all blame, what we recover to them: whereas if we acquieſce in the detention of our due, they will be ſtill more likely to do ſo, and thus the loſs of it will be perpetuated.

petuated. Therefore in cases both sufficiently plain, and of sufficient importance, when all other ways have been tried to no purpose, and the right will be either extinguished, or much obscured, by delay; and perhaps the example spread further: I see not, how we can excuse ourselves from applying to a proper court of justice, if we can hope to procure a sentence from it, without absolute ruin or extreme distress. For it is a mean and wicked selfishness, to hoard up wealth, consult our ease, or court the favour of our superiors, by letting the inheritance of the church be impoverished, while the guardianship of it is in our hands.

But then we must be doubly careful of what all men should be abundantly more careful of, than most are, that we never awe persons, especially poor persons, unjustly, by threatning them with law, into a compliance with our demands; and that no dispute of this kind ever entice us to do any thing fraudulent, or provoke us to do any thing ill-natured or vexatious. And particularly, if we have a demand on any of the people called Quakers, we should, if we possibly can, pursue it by that method only, which the act, for the more easy recovery of small tithes, hath provided: and rather sit down with a moderate loss, than do otherwise. For they are a generation, loud in their complaints, unfair in their representations, and peculiarly bitter in their reflections, where we are concerned: unwearied in labouring to render us odious, and surprizingly artful in recommending themselves to the great.

But I proceed to the less troublesome and disagreeable duty of preserving what we still possess. Now to this end the most obvious way is keeping the glebe in our own hands, and taking the tithes and all other dues, ourselves: for which reason probably, amongst others, both ancient ecclesiastical constitutions, and later acts of Parliament, have restrained and limited leasing of benefices. But many are so little qualified for this, and would be so great losers by it: and others would find it such a hindrance to the discharge of their ministerial office, or the pursuit of useful studies: nay, where it hath been long disused, the people might perhaps be so much offended with the novelty: that I would by no means press doing it in all cases, but only recommend it in proper ones. And where it is done, if a clergyman were to attend to such matters too closely; and, above all, were to be over-watchful and strict about small demands: it would naturally raise a contempt, if not hatred of him. And therefore it will be much better to content ourselves with giving parishioners, by prudent instruction, a general sense of their obligation to pay their dues; and by engaging behaviour, a general disposition to it; than to exact the minuter sorts of them with an indecent eagerness. But still, where rights, that may seem inconsiderable in each particular case, amount to more on the whole, than it is convenient to lose; and yet will be withheld, if not insisted on: we must do it, with as good a grace as we can; and remind persons, if there be need, that such as make this necessary, are indeed they, who act the mean part: that it is no fault of ours to require what the law hath allotted us for our maintenance; but a great misfortune, that so much of it consists in these petty articles.

Whatever tithes it will be incommodious to keep in our own hands, we may compound for with those who should pay them, or lease them to

others

others. The former way will usually be kinder and more obliging, and so far more eligible. Yet on the other hand, if we chuse the latter, our lessee will probably find it his interest to take them in kind, which will preserve our title to them in kind: and therefore it may at least be expedient sometimes, in relation to any questionable parts of them. But if a tenant will rather give up some of our rights, than be at the trouble of asserting them, we may be under a necessity of doing it ourselves. And if we let any of our tithes to the proprietor of what they arise from, or to whomsoever we let our glebe, it should never be for too long a time at the same rent: else we run a great risque of being told, that we are intitled to nothing more. The person indeed, who makes the agreement with us, cannot think so: and yet what even he may pretend to our successors, we cannot foresee. But the person, that comes after him, may insist on it even to us: and though the evil should be delayed longer, it will happen much too soon. Written agreements, discreetly worded, may be an useful and effectual preventive. Yet these, in course of time, may be lost by various accidents: or constancy of the same unvaried payment be alledged as a stronger argument on one side, than they are on the other. And if either should prove our case, contending at law with any parishioner will be a very undesirable thing: and contending with a powerful one may be an impracticable thing. Therefore we ought never to begin customs, that may be dangerous: and if they are begun, even by our predecessor's fault, and yet more if by our own, we should think how to stop them without delay. But the least we can do, is resolutely to refuse authorizing such invasions, by giving any thing under our hands, which may but seem an acknowledgment that what we receive is a prescript and unchangeable payment, unless we are very well assured that the law will esteem it such. We ought rather to lose it ourselves, than procure it by an act, that will prejudice our successors. Barely continuing to accept it unaltered, is doing more than enough to their disadvantage: therefore we ought on no account to go further; but on the contrary, labour to procure and perpetuate, if we can, such evidence, as may be of service to them.

Nor should we be careful only to preserve our benefices from any diminution of income, but also from any addition of expence, which would amount to the same thing: for heavy burthens, and very unfit ones, of riotous entertainments in particular, and those sometimes at the most improper seasons, have been introduced and established in many places, by the inconsiderateness and supineness of incumbents. We shall do well, absolutely to break and annihilate such customs, if it remains legally possible: and if not, to use our utmost influence towards procuring the consent of the persons concerned, to change them into something else, less exceptionable and more useful, to be secured to them as firmly, as may be; with a covenant added, that they shall be intitled to return to their old usage, if ever they are denied the benefit of the new.

Provided the abovementioned precautions be observed, we are much at liberty to treat our parishioners as kindly, as we will: and very kindly we ought to treat them: never permitting them, if we know it, to go without any thing, which is their right; to pay any thing, which is not due;

due; or even to take any thing too dear: always making them equitable abatements, admitting every tolerable excuſe for their delays of payment; and rather chuſing to loſe ever ſo much by them, than with any ſhadow of juſtice be accuſed of cruelty towards them. Yet when we ſhew them any indulgence, we ſhould let them ſee, we are ſenſible of what we do for them: elſe they may impute it to our ignorance, not our goodneſs. And we ought not to be ſo eaſy with them, as to ſet them againſt a ſucceſſor, who cannot afford to imitate us; or diſqualify ourſelves, by a promiſcuous kindneſs to all, from being eſpecially kind to ſuch as want. But whatever improvements we make in our benefices, by whatever juſt means, it will be a prudent guard againſt envy, as well as a right behaviour on other accounts, to increaſe, at the ſame time, either a ſober modeſt hoſpitality, for neither exceſs nor vain ſhew at all become our function; or, which is yet better, and ought never to be excluded by the other, a judicious charity; above all, to the induſtrious and virtuous poor, extended to their ſouls, as well as their bodies.

For the purpoſe of recovering or preſerving the rights of vicarages, the original endowments of them may be very uſeful. And theſe you are to ſeek for in the regiſter books of the Dioceſe of *Lincoln*, out of which this was taken. But I have collected copies of ſome; and can direct you to books, printed or manuſcript, in which are copies of others; or to that part of the regiſter-books, in which they may be found: and ſhall gladly give any of you whatever information is in my power. But you muſt not always conclude your preſent rights to be neither more nor leſs, than ſuch an endowment ſets forth: both becauſe there may be a ſubſequent one, with variations; and becauſe, where no ſubſequent one appears, long cuſtom, in particular caſes, may create a legal preſumption, that there was one, upon which that cuſtom was grounded.

For the ſame uſe, in rectories, as well as vicarages, terriers were directed: how anciently, I cannot ſay. But the 87th Canon of 1603 enjoins, that the Biſhop of each Dioceſe ſhall procure them to be taken, by the view of honeſt men in every pariſh, to be appointed by him, whereof the miniſter to be one: it ſpecifies the particulars, of which they ſhall conſiſt, and orders them to be laid up in the Biſhop's regiſtry. How often they ſhall be taken, it doth not mention. But plainly the changes, which time introduces, particularly in the names of the parcels and abuttals of glebe lands, require a renewal of terriers at reaſonable diſtances. This Canon hath been obſerved ſo imperfectly, that of about 200 pariſhes, of which this Dioceſe conſiſts, there are terriers in the regiſtry of no more than about 126: and moſt of them only one: and of theſe, not 20, ſince the year 1685. In the convocation of 1704, complaints were made of the like omiſſions elſewhere: and in thoſe of 1710, 1714, 1715, a ſcheme was formed, that where no terrier had been made for 7 years then laſt paſt, (which looks as if a repetition every 7 years was intended) (*a*) the miniſter ſhould make one, with the church-

(*a*) *Prideaux*, Directions to Church-wardens, § 99. ſaith, that the Biſhop at every viſitation uſually requires a new terrier. Biſhop *Gibſon* propoſes that there ſhould be a new one where there had been none ſince the reſtoration.

church-wardens, or such parishioners as the Bishop should appoint: that three indented copies of it in parchment should be signed by them; one to be exhibited at the Bishop's next visitation, the second at the Archdeacon's, and the third put in the parish chest (*b*). But these proposals having never received the sanction of due authority, are to be considered as no more than prudent directions: the Canon of 1603 still continues our only legal rule. And I am very desirous to perform the part, which it assigns to me. But then I must beg your assistance in order to my nominating proper persons, that is, parishioners of the greatest probity, knowledge, and substance, to be joined in the work with you. Terriers indeed are of more use in causes tried before ecclesiastical judges, than temporal: who will not allow the spiritual judicatures to be courts of record: but still, when regularly made, they will have some weight every where. At least they will be valuable and authentic informations to your successors: and probably the parishioners of future times will be ashamed to insist on claims, contrary to what they will see asserted under the hands of their predecessors, perhaps their fathers or near relations. But then, to produce these good effects, indeed to prevent their producing bad ones, they must be made with great care. If there be a preceding terrier, it must be consulted: if it be defective, the defects must be supplied; if it be accurate, there must be no variations from it in the new, but where they are necessary to render descriptions intelligible; or where other alterations have been made that require them. For contradictory terriers will hurt, if not destroy, each other's evidence. It will also be right to express in them, what peculiar burthens are incumbent on the minister, or that there are none, as well as what property belongs to him. But if his right, or obligation, to any thing, be doubtful: either no terrier must be made, till the doubt is removed; or it must be set down there as a doubtful point; but by no means given up to please any person, or serve any purpose whatever. For terriers, that make against the Clergy, will do them abundantly more harm, than such, as make in their favour, will do them good. And lastly, though it may be needless and inconvenient to employ many persons in drawing up a terrier, yet the more sign it, the better; especially if considerable persons: for to omit any of them, and multiply the names of others, will appear suspicious. And as it may not always be easy to procure such hands, as you could wish; favourable opportunities must be prudently sought and waited for; and the work undertaken, when they offer, and not before.

Other very useful precautions, of near affinity to this of terriers, are, that if any augmentations have been made of your benefices, by payments reserved in church or college leases, by the Queen's bounty, or otherwise: or if any agreement have been entered into, between you, or your predecessors, and the patron and ordinary, for making any exchange or inclosure, or doing any other act, which affects your income, or any part of it, whether it be confirmed by a legal decree or not: proper evidences

(*b*) See *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 638, 656. It was also proposed that a calendar should be made of those which were put in the registry, and that they should not be delivered out, without security given.

dences of theſe things ſhould both be kept amongſt your parochial papers, and depoſited in the public office. Indeed the law requires that augmentations, made by eccleſiaſtical bodies or perſons, be entered in a parchment book, to be kept in the Biſhop's regiſtry for that end (*c*). And though acts of Parliament, paſſed for any of the purpoſes abovementioned, may be conſidered as things more notorious: yet without the ſame ſort of care, the memory of theſe alſo may be loſt, or ſome of the proviſions made in them controverted.

There is ſtill one thing more, that, amongſt ſeveral other uſes to which it extends, may be very ſerviceable to aſcertain the rights of livings: I mean repeating from time to time, the ancient practice of perambulations: which hath been long freed from ſuperſtition; and, if preſerved alſo from intemperance and tumultuous conteſts, the laſt of which evils may be prevented by friendly diſcourſe beforehand with the chief inhabitants of your own and the neighbouring pariſhes; the thankſgivings, prayers, and ſentences of ſcripture, with which the injunctions of Queen *Elizabeth* directed it to be accompanied, will render it a very pious ceremony: and the civil benefits of it may be conſiderable. For though, without it, there ſeldom will ariſe any queſtion, to what pariſh, lands that have been long cultivated, appertain: yet concerning others, in the whole or in part, there often doth. And ſome, that are worth but little at preſent, may come hereafter to be of great value.

But, beſides preſerving the incomes of our benefices from encroachments, we are bound to preſerve the lands and edifices belonging to them, in good condition. If therefore we commit waſte on our glebe, or, through covetouſneſs or negligence, impoveriſh it, or ſuffer our tenant to impoveriſh it, we act diſhonourably and unjuſtly: as alſo, if we permit our dwelling-houſes or out-buildings to fall into decay, for want of early or ſufficient repair. A ſmall expence in time may prevent the neceſſity of a much larger afterwards, and thus, by neglecting it, we may hurt ourſelves; which would doubtleſs be unwiſe: but deſignedly throwing the burthen on our ſucceſſor deſerves a harſher name. And if we either ſquander extravagantly, or hoard avariciouſly, what we ſave thus; it doubles the fault. If mere indolence be the cauſe of our omiſſion; it is by no means a good principle; and produces effects, as bad, as if it were a worſe. Nay, if we are influenced by the deſire of making only a reaſonable proviſion for our families: we have no right to provide for them by wronging our ſucceſſor; and perhaps depriving our pariſhioners of the benefit of having a miniſter reſident amongſt them. Poſſibly ſome may ſay, that their executors muſt account for whatever they leave out of order: and therefore they do no harm. But it may be, they will leave them nothing to account with: eſpecially as the common law prefers the payment of other debts before dilapidations (*d*). At leaſt they well know, that the law, though it will allow more, than executors commonly pretend; and perhaps more, than would have prevented the damage, if applied in time; will not allow enough to repair it afterwards; or however not to compenſate moreover for the expence and trouble of taking that remedy: and that therefore, in all likelihood, a ſucceſſor, to avoid

(*c*) 29 Car. 2. c. 8. § 4, 5, 6.
(*d*) See *Gibſon*'s Codex, p. 791.

avoid law, will chuſe rather to accept of leſs, than he ought to have. Now driving him to this, is doing him a groſs injury; and that very probably when he is juſt coming into the world in ſuch circumſtances, that it will weigh heavy upon him, and may put him behind hand for a long time. Some again will plead, that they really cannot afford to repair their houſes. And doubtleſs the condition of many is very pitiable, and deſerves the aſſiſtance, as well as compaſſion, of their richer neighbours and brethren. But ſtill what reaſon is there to think, that they, who come after them, will be better able, when the houſes are grown worſe? And what muſt it therefore end in, unleſs timely prevention be applied? Others may alledge, theirs are in repair; and no dilapidations will be found, when they leave them. But are they in ſuch repair, ſo ſubſtantial and ſo decent, as a miniſter's houſe ought, that belongs to ſuch a benefice: or only juſt habitable, and patched up to hold out a little longer? Perhaps you keep your houſe in as good a condition, as you found it. But did you think your predeceſſor acted well, when he left it you in no better? If not, that which was his duty, is now yours. Theſe things all incumbents ought to conſider: but ſome more eſpecially; as they who have large benefices, and they who have two; which may be ordinarily ſuppoſed equivalent to a large one. Yet theſe latter, in how good order ſoever they may, for their own ſakes, keep the houſe they uſually reſide in, have too often left the other to be treated as a farmer or tenant pleaſes: till it hath grown, if not ruinous, yet very unſuitable to its next proper inhabitant. Again, rich perſons, that are poſſeſſed of poor livings, ought peculiarly to reflect, how noble an opportunity is put into their hands of being benefactors to them: by repairing, or, if need be, rebuilding, and fitting up, the houſes; and improving whatever little ſpace of ground lies about them, in ſuch manner, as will make both comfortable to the ſucceeding owners. And the very different method, which they have ſometimes taken, of living in better habitations themſelves, and letting theſe run into decay, is extremely ungenerous and illiberal. Yet indeed, on the other hand, making parſonage or vicarage houſes, or the appurtenances of them, ſo large for their own convenience, as to bring on afterwards too great an expence in ſupporting them, would be a mark, either of much vanity, or little conſideration.

On this whole ſubject I might, inſtead of perſuaſion, uſe authority alone. But as the latter would be much leſs pleaſing to me: ſo I hope the former will be as effectual with you. Elſe, the laws of the church in this nation, empower the Biſhop, if incumbents do not repair their houſes in a decent manner (*e*), to take cognizance of the neglect either on complaint or by voluntary inquiry, and to proceed againſt them by eccleſiaſtical cenſures; or, after admoniſhing them in vain, to make himſelf

(*e*) Semper tamen rationabilis conſideratio ſit habenda ad facultates eccleſiæ. Conſt. Edm. *Si Rector*; on which *Lyndwood*'s note is, Quia in beneficio pinguiori requiruntur ædificia magis ſumptuoſa quam in beneficio minus pingui. Lib. 3. Tit. 27. de eccl. ædificandis. Verb. *Facultates Eccleſiæ*, p. 251.

himself what repair is needful out of the profits of their benefices: and what proportion of them shall be applied to this purpose, is left to his discretion (*f*): but the injunctions of *H.* 8. *Ed.* 6. and Q. *Eliz.* directed a fifth (*g*). And a further constitution of *Othobon*, published in the year 1268, expressly orders, that such a sequestration be made in the case of houses fallen down, as well as decayed (*h*). And the *Ref. Leg. Eccl.* had provided in the same manner for the same thing (*i*), in conformity with evident reason. Indeed, where no house hath been for a long time, compelling the incumbent to rebuild one may seem hard. But is it not harder still, that his parishioners and successors should never more enjoy an advantage, intended to be a perpetual one? At least, whatever he may think of his legal obligation, he should consider, whether he is not in conscience obliged to devote some fitting share of his income to this use. Surely, if he doth not think it a strict duty, he must think it, unless there be some peculiar reason to the contrary, an excellently good action. And supposing that what he can lay by, will amount only to a tolerable beginning: yet others may, and probably will, sooner or later, add to it, and complete the work.

But whatever care you ought to take, and I ought to see that you take, in relation to your houses: there is still a much greater, for the same reasons and more, due from you, who are rectors, in relation to your chancels: and I am yet more expressly authorized, by Statute-law as well as Canon, to superintend this matter. Chancels are the most sacred part of the church: and the whole church ought to be preserved in a condition, worthy of that Being, whose it is; and fit to inspire his worshippers with reverence. The light of Nature taught the Heathens to adorn their temples (*k*). God himself provided, by express and minute directions, for the beauty of his sanctuary amongst the Jews: the ancient Christians imitated these precedents, as soon as ever the danger of persecution ceased (*l*): and if the following ages carried their notions of magnificence and ornament in religious edifices too far, as undoubtedly they did, in heaping up treasures there, which had much better have been distributed to the poor, than kept to provoke the envy and avarice of the great: yet in this country, for several generations past, the contrary extreme hath prevailed to so shameful a degree, as must needs give Papists an exceeding great disgust to Protestantism; and Infidels no small contempt of Christians, as either despising inwardly the religion they profess, or being too sordid to pay it the common outward marks of respect.

Now what hope can we have of bringing our people back, unless we set them the example? What can we say to our parishioners about their churches, or to lay-impropriators about their chancels; or, say what we

(*f*) See *Gibson*'s Codex, T. 32. c. 3. p. 789, *&c.*

(*g*) See *Wilkins*, vol. 4. p. 5. The Ref. Leg. Eccl. Tit. de Dilapidationibus, c. 2. p. 77. directs only a 7th.

(*h*) *Gibson*'s Codex. Tit. 32. c. 3. p. 789.

(*i*) Tit. de Dilap. c. 2. p. 77.

(*k*) *Hor.* Od. 15. lib. 2. and Sat. 2. lib. 2. v. 103, 104, 105.

(*l*) See *Bingham.*

we will, how can it be expected they ſhould mind us, if we are blameable ourſelves on the ſame head? In reſpect of their duty in this point, and ſome concern, (indeed not a little) which you have with it, I intend to ſpeak at large, if God ſpare my life and health to another viſitation. But at preſent I confine myſelf to what is more immediately and intirely the province of the Clergy. Anciently the repair of the whole church was incumbent on the rector as of common right (*m*). I believe it continues to be ſo ſtill in other nations: but the cuſtom of ours hath releaſed us from the largeſt part of the burthen: for which reaſon we ought to bear the remainder very chearfully; and exceed what in ſtrictneſs might be demanded of us. Plainneſs of appearance, though carried almoſt to the borders of neglect, in relation to our own perſons and abodes, may be a judicious and inſtructive mark of ſimplicity and humility. But it will be much more ſo, if, at the ſame time, we are liberal in providing for the honour of ſacred things. And if, inſtead of that, we take juſt the contrary part; dwell, as the Prophet expreſſes himſelf, *in ceiled houſes, and let the houſe of God lie waſte* (*n*); ſuffer the principal part of it, and that with which we are intruſted, to be in a worſe condition, than any common room we live in; think nothing too good for ourſelves, and every thing good enough for him and his ſervice; it is an exceeding bad ſign; and muſt have a moſt undeſirable effect on all who obſerve it. I believe indeed that the chancels, which belong to incumbents, will be generally found in the beſt condition of any. Yet ſome even of theſe, I fear, have ſcarce been kept in neceſſary preſent repair, and others by no means duly cleared from annoyances, which muſt gradually bring them to decay: water undermining and rotting the foundations, earth heaped up againſt the outſide, weeds and ſhrubs growing upon them, or trees too near them. Where ſufficient attention is paid to theſe things; too frequently the floors are meanly paved, or the walls dirty or patched, or the windows ill glazed, and it may be in part ſtopt up, or the roof not ceiled: or they are damp, offenſive and unwholeſome, for want of a due circulation of air. Now it is indiſpenſably requiſite to preſerve them not only ſtanding and ſafe, but clean, neat, decent, agreeable: and it is highly fit to go further, and ſuperadd, not a light and trivial finery, but ſuch degrees of proper dignity and grandeur, as we are able, conſiſtently with other real obligations. Perhaps they may have been long, or perhaps always, as mean as they are at preſent. But the meanneſs which in ages of leſs elegance might give no offence, may juſtly give more than a little now. And why ſhould not the church of God, as well as every thing elſe about us, partake of the improvements of later times? In ſeveral of your chancels, I doubt not, every thing which I have been recommending is done. In others you have reſolved to do it: and if any have not rightly conſidered the matter before, they muſt be ſenſible, that it was my duty to admoniſh them, and is theirs to regard the admonition. For, as to the excuſes, which may be pleaded under this head

(*m*) See *Conſt. Othob.* Tit. 17, and *John de Athon*, Verb. *Cancellos.*
(*n*) *Hag.* i. 4.

head of chancels, they have been obviated, under the former of parſonage-houſes.

It only remains now, that I ſpeak briefly to the third point, our obligations in regard to the temporalities of our benefices, when we have a near view of quitting them: whether by death, which may be near us at any time, and muſt be ſo in old age; or any other way. Some, becauſe they were not to continue incumbents long, have ſet themſelves to conſult their own intereſts, by neglect of all expenſive duties, by committing waſte, by allowing others to commit it. A manner of proceeding, in all caſes unjuſt: when they are removing to a better income, peculiarly diſhonourable: when they ſee their latter end approach, ſhockingly wicked; unleſs the decay of their faculties furniſh ſome excuſe for them. Rejecting therefore all ſuch practices with juſt abomination, we are bound in theſe circumſtances, to conſider ſeriouſly, what our paſt faults and omiſſions, relating to this article, have been: to undo, as far as we can, what we have done amiſs: to do immediately what we ought to have done ſooner: to make the amends we are able, if any harm hath happened by the delay; and indeed, ſome amends for the chance there was, that harm might have happened. But, how rightly ſoever we may have acted hitherto, there will ſtill be duties, peculiar to the time, which I am now ſuppoſing: that we ſecure to our ſucceſſors whatever books, deeds, and papers, relating to our benefices, came down to us from our predeceſſors; whatever evidences our own incumbency hath furniſhed; in a word, whatever notices may be of importance, concerning the rights, or the value, of the living we enjoy. But particularly, if we have been ſo inconſiderate, as to make any long agreement, which a ſucceeding miniſter may be in danger of miſtaking, or others may be tempted to ſet up, for an eſtabliſhed preſcription; as may eaſily happen if it was done many years ago: we ought to leave them the moſt authentic proofs of the real ſtate and truth of the caſe. Some have through indolence omitted theſe things. Others have deſignedly kept in their own power, or left in that of their executors, all ſuch means of information; that their ſucceſſors, in order to receive them, may be bound to behave reaſonably and kindly, as they are pleaſed to term it; that is, may be under a neceſſity of ſubmitting to whatever unreaſonable things ſhall be demanded of them; in reſpect of dilapidations, or any other point. This, you cannot but ſee, would be making an unfaithful uſe of thoſe lights, which have been intruſted with you by others, and an oppreſſive one of thoſe which you have added yourſelves. Or ſuppoſing that only equitable requeſts are made to a ſucceſſor, and that he refuſes them: ſtill it is not a Chriſtian part, to prevent this injury by threatning, and much leſs to revenge it by doing, what in all likelihood would be a far greater injury; and may extend its bad effects, beyond the perſon, who hath given the provocation, to all that ſhall fill his place hereafter, though perfectly innocent; and to every one that might have ſhared in the advantage of their enjoying a more plentiful income. Nor is it ſufficient, that you diſapprove ſuch conduct, unleſs you make a due proviſion, that your repreſentatives when you are gone ſhall not be guilty of it. You may have a better opinion of them in this reſpect, than they

they deſerve: at leaſt, there can be no harm in taking a little more care of ſuch a matter, than might be abſolutely neceſſary.

One powerful motive to be careful in all the points, which I have been mentioning, is, that few things will contribute more to your maintaining while you live, and leaving when you die, the character of men of probity and honour, amongſt your neighours in general, and your brethren of the Clergy in particular, than your diligent and diſintereſted attention to act worthily and kindly in relation to your ſucceſſors, though probably you know them not, or however have no perſonal connection with them. Nor will many things throw a blacker or more laſting ſtain upon perſons, than a low cunning, or a ſelfiſh indifference, in theſe affairs. But indeed conſcience, as well as reputation, is deeply concerned in the matter, as I doubt not, but you are all ſenſible. Nor ſurely will any one elſe imagine, either that my exhortations to you, any more than yours to your hearers, imply you to be guilty of, or eſpecially inclined to any of the faults, againſt which they are levelled: or that, by ſpeaking thus long of your wordly affairs, I ſeem to think them of weight equal, or comparable, to your ſpiritual functions. But the beſt of us have need to be admoniſhed of all our duties, be they duties of higher rank or lower, each in their turns. Temporal things are not to be neglected: and thoſe leaſt of all, which are ſet apart for the ſervice of things eternal. But then we muſt be watchful over them, in order to employ them, as they were meant to be employed: and if we preſerve and tranſmit them ever ſo faithfully, but uſe them unfaithfully; ſtudying only or chiefly to enrich or advance ourſelves, or gratify our ſenſual appetites, or love of diverſions, or of elegant appearance, by means of thoſe revenues, which were given us for ends widely different: (partly to make a comfortable and moderate, not a ſuperfluous and invidious proviſion for ourſelves and ours, and partly to ſerve the purpoſes of religion and charity) we offend God, ſin againſt our brethren, and provoke men to take from us what they are too ready to ſay we do no good with: as indeed little would be done, were ſuch a conduct general. It is true, and the laity ought to conſider it a great deal more than they do, that we have very few of us much, if any thing, to ſpare. But they who have, ſhould *let their light ſhine before men*, and be ſeen to lay it out in pious uſes prudently choſen: and the pooreſt ſhould occaſionally give what alms they can; and make amends for their inability on this head, by a double diligence in uſeful inſtruction, pious example, and obliging behaviour, to the meaneſt of their people. Without a remarkable degree of ſuch care, we ſhall have few or no friends: and notwithſtanding it, we ſhall have many enemies. This is hard treatment: but angry complaints will only make it worſe; and the moſt reaſonable expoſtulations not much better, unleſs we firſt conſider, wherein we are faulty or defective, and amend it; wherein we are unjuſtly blamed or ſuſpected, and clear ourſelves: then patiently perſevere in well-doing, *in all things approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God, by pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by kindneſs, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left, through honour and diſhonour, through evil report and good report* (*o*). Other means, if they could

(*o*) 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6, 7, 8.

could ſupport us, cannot enable us to anſwer the end of our inſtitution. But by theſe we may ſtill hope, not only to confute, but, which muſt ever be our chief aim, if poſſible, to convert, at leaſt to mollify our adverſaries; and ſo recommend ourſelves to more impartial perſons, that they may *receive with meekneſs the engrafted word, which is able to ſave their ſouls* (*p*). Or ſhould we, after all, in reſpect of ever ſo many, *labour in vain, and ſpend our ſtrength for nought, yet our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God* (*q*).

(*p*) James i. 21. (*q*) Iſa. xlix. 4.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

OXFORD,

In the YEAR 1753.

Reverend Brethren,

I HAVE never attempted in my former viſitations, nor ſhall I in this, to entertain you with any thing new and curious: thinking it much fitter for me, and better for you, to ſpeak to you of ſuch points, immediately relating to common practice, as, though eaſily underſtood, are too frequently diſregarded. With this view I have gone through the principal parts of your duty, as parochial miniſters, in reſpect both of ſpirituals and temporals. But beſides what is wholly incumbent on yourſelves, in ſome things you are jointly concerned with your church-wardens: and in others, though not expreſsly commiſſioned by law to interpoſe, you may do it nevertheleſs, with peculiar propriety, weight, and influence.

Of the former sort are those offences against religion and morals, which the church-wardens are bound by oath to present; and the incumbent, or his curate, impowered and charged by the 113th and following Canons to join with them in presenting, if need be; or to present alone, if they refuse. This naturally implies, what the 26th Canon expresses, that the minister is to urge the church-wardens to perform that part of their office. Indeed your first endeavour should be, by due instructions and exhortations, to hinder such offences: your next, by due reproofs, public or private, to amend them. But if both prove ineffectual, what remains is, to get them corrected by authority. I am perfectly sensible, that both immorality and irreligion are grown almost beyond the reach of ecclesiastical power: which having in former times been very unwarrantably extended, hath since been very unjustly and imprudently cramped and weakened many ways. I am sensible also, that sometimes church-wardens, nay even ministers, are so dependent on persons, who deserve to be presented, that they cannot present them without imminent hazard of ruining themselves: and farther still, that some offenders, if they were thus exposed, would only become worse, and set themselves to make others worse: while some again, as the Apostle expresses it in this very case, would be *swallowed up with overmuch sorrow* (*a*). Now surely it cannot have been designed by our gracious Redeemer, or the rulers of his church, that the power of spiritual censures, which the same Apostle hath twice declared the Lord to *have given for edification, not for destruction* (*b*), should be exercised in circumstances like these. Therefore when circumstances are evidently and undeniably of this kind, I think you should not insist on your church-wardens presenting. But there is much more danger of their being guilty of too great remissness, than running into overmuch rigour. And therefore you must advise and entreat them to make presentments of sinners, where probably it will be useful; and to contemn the displeasure of bad people, when it can have no extremely ill consequences, (of which there is commonly much more fear than is necessary) for the hope of their amendment and the good of others round them. The very office of church-wardens obliges them to this: their oath yet more firmly. And if they are backward still, after being told it doth, you must acquaint them, that you are directed by the 26th Canon, (in the execution of which however, as in all points of discipline, discretion should be used,) to refuse them the holy communion; not indeed for every neglect of presenting offences, but if they wilfully neglect it in desperate defiance of their oath, when they are urged to it by their neighbours, their minister or ordinary: for so the same Canon describes the case: in which case likewise you will inform them, the court is authorized, by Canon 117, to proceed against them for perjury. But, along with these terrors, you will be sure to join fitting encouragements. You will promise to defend them to their parishioners, and even to the person presented, as doing only their duty. You will assure them, as you may, first, that the court will take notice of their presentments, no farther, than is proper; so that they shall not incur the displeasure of the offenders and their friends for nothing; then, that it will proceed, not with a view to gain,

(*a*) 2 Cor. ii. 7. (*b*) 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10.

gain, but to reformation and example: not with exceſſive, nor, if it can be avoided, with the utmoſt rigour, but with equity and moderation.

If all this be unſucceſsful, you muſt, in caſes that require it, offer to join with them, or even reſolve to preſent without them. But you muſt never take any ſtep in theſe matters, much leſs the more extraordinary ſteps, from motives of reſentment, intereſt, or party. If ſuch inducements can be with any colour of reaſon imputed to you, they will ſo grievouſly diſcredit what you do, that probably you had better do nothing. But only take care to ſhew, that you act merely from good intention, accompanied with temper and prudence, after trying gentler methods in vain: and ſome will vindicate, and even applaud you: more will inwardly and ſilently reſpect you; and the number of the reſt will not be formidable.

But then whoever brings a complaint, muſt enable the court to take due cognizance of it: elſe preſentments will be deſpiſed; and the conſequences be worſe, than if they had not been made. Evidence muſt of neceſſity be furniſhed: otherwiſe there can be no proceeding. Expences, I hope I may promiſe, will be as low as poſſible; and they ſhould be cheerfully born for the good of the pariſh and the public. It is not reaſonable that the court ſhould bear them. Temporal courts never do. And beſides, there is room for plauſible, though unjuſt, ſuſpicions of partiality, where the judge appears to be in effect proſecutor too, and is intereſted in condemning the party accuſed.

When perſons are preſented, you muſt uſe your beſt endeavours to make them ſorry, not merely that they are in danger of being puniſhed, but principally that they have ſinned: and in proportion as you ſucceed in that, recommend them to ſuch favour, as can be ſhewn them. When perſons are excommunicated, (which I heartily wiſh no one ever was but for crimes, though indeed a wilful contempt of authority is a great crime) you muſt preſs them to conſider ſeriouſly, how they would be affected, if a phyſician or a lawyer of eminence pronounced their caſe deſperate; and of how much greater importance the concerns of eternity are, than thoſe of time. You muſt alſo admoniſh them, that ſlighting a cenſure, paſſed on them for their amendment, will make their condition ſtill more deplorable. And when they have been denounced excommunicated, by the 85th Canon, the church-wardens are to ſee, that in every meeting of the congregation they be kept out of the church. Nor muſt you ſuffer them to be ſureties for children in baptiſm, to receive the holy euchariſt, or to have Chriſtian burial. Farther, if they continue without abſolution for three months, the 65th Canon directs you to declare them excommunicated in the pariſh church every half year; that others, meaning ſuch as have no neceſſary connections with them, may thereby be admoniſhed to refrain their company, and excited the rather to procure out a writ *de excommunicato capiendo*: that is, if the circumſtances of the caſe make it requiſite. Again, when perſons do penance, you muſt be diligent to make them ſeriouſly ſenſible of the uſefulneſs of ſuch diſcipline; and the unſpeakable obligations they have to the Goſpel of Chriſt, which alone aſſures men of forgiveneſs on any terms. And laſtly, both on all ſuch, and all other fit occaſions, you muſt remind your people, that however the cenſures of the church may

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be relaxed or evaded, the final judgment of God on obstinate sinners is both unavoidable and insupportable.

Besides the presentment of persons who give offence, you are concerned likewise in that of things belonging to the church, which are not kept in good repair and order.

I have already spoken to you concerning the repair of your houses and chancels: and enlarged on the reasons, why both, but especially the latter, should be always preserved not only in a firm and safe, but decent and respectable state. Now the same reasons hold in regard to the rest of the church: and after you have set the example in your own part, you may with reputation and weight call on your parishioners to do what is proper in theirs. And indeed you are bound to it. For, as *John* of *Athon* hath justly observed (*c*), *Licet per consuetudinem exoneretur rector a sumptibus præstandis, non tamen eximitur a curâ & solicitudine impendendâ.* Thus far even the body of the church is still under your inspection: and if any thing be remarkably amiss there, and you take no notice; good and considerate persons will lament it, as a bad sign and of bad consequence: others will make your indifference a plea to excuse their own; and yet while they are glad of it, will be likely enough to condemn you for it; and perhaps be led by it to think meanly of religion, as well as of you. Besides, church-wardens have often but little sense of propriety in these matters: therefore you should labour to give them a sense of it: convince them, by reason and scripture, of the honour due to the house of God: shew them, that their own honour too is interested; that a church in handsome condition is a credit to the whole parish; and in particular to the officers, who have put it in that condition, and whose names will be long remembered on that account. They are often afraid of the expence. Argue with them, that things may be done gradually, and so the expence be rendered almost imperceptible: persuade them to lessen their expences in needless matters; in eating and drinking at visitations, and on other occasions, sometimes to excess, never to any good purpose; and observe to them, how much righter and more commendable it would be, to lay out or lay up that money for proper uses: how shameful indeed, to squander it in riot and folly, and be never the better, but the worse the next day; when they might dispose of it so, as to see the good effects for years, and have them seen for ages. If still you cannot influence the present church-wardens, try their successors. You have a concurrent right with the parishioners in chusing them; and if your opinions differ, you are to chuse one, they another: unless there be a custom to the contrary. Surely then, within some reasonable time, you may get such as will hearken to you. If you fail of success that way, desire your people to reflect how their money goes: not in fees of visitations, which are no higher now, than when the value of money was thrice, perhaps five times, higher, but in extravagance and intemperance: that therefore they ought not to complain of the court, but of their own officers; indeed ought to disallow the wrong and idle articles of their accounts; and may be assured, the court will support them in doing so.

Sometimes the church-wardens are willing to lay out money as they ought,

(*c*) *Const. Othob.* 17. verb. *ad hac tenentur*, p. 113.

ought, but the parishioners unwilling. In that case you must acquaint the former, that no man's consent is wanted for their repairing and keeping in good order, both the church, and every thing belonging to it, which is either necessary, or which they found there: nor is the consent of every man requisite, but of the majority only of a parish-meeting duly called, for adding any thing new, provided the ordinary approve it. However, they should do their utmost, and you should assist them, to procure the concurrence of all the parishioners; or at least, of as many as possible: to whom you will represent for this end, that a moderate expence now will prevent a much greater hereafter: that almost all the churches in the nation were built many ages ago, and a very great part of them about the same time: that without constant and substantial repairs, in another generation or another century, they will be falling at the same time; and how will they be rebuilt? The inhabitants, if we may guess from what we see at present, will be both less able and less inclined. As for help from briefs: those for other things produce but little; but those for churches extremely little; to the great shame indeed of persons, who call themselves Christians: and you should labour to rectify their prejudices on this head, and excite them to be more charitable. But God knows whether they will; and if hereafter they should, what can be hoped from it, when almost every parish in the land will want a brief? In many, it is to be feared there will be no churches; in others, wretchedly mean ones; to the contempt of all religion amongst Infidels, and of the Protestant religion amongst Papists. Repeat and inculcate it therefore on your people, that they must take care of the churches they have: if not, their posterity will run the risque of having none. Too many will scarcely be moved even by that consideration: but there is the more need of moving such as you can; and, getting into a condition of moving more, by all proper methods of recommending the Gospel and yourselves.

But to persons of rank and figure in your parishes, one should hope you might apply with very fair prospect of success. To these you may surely represent at favourable seasons, that labouring people part very hardly with the money, which they get very hardly: that therefore their superiors should not only use their influence and example to make them willing, but indeed should do for them what perhaps they are almost as unable to do, as they are unwilling; especially what goes any length beyond repairs absolutely necessary: for that people of low degree, though they may have some notion of neatness and elegance, yet will murmur grievously to pay much for it in their churches, and part of their ill humour will fall on the doctrine taught there: that especially if they are tenants, their concern in the place being temporary, and possibly also short or uncertain, they will of course endeavour to shift off the burthen from themselves: but that landlords have a more lasting interest, and will find their account better in doing things early at their own cost, than in letting them run on, till the cost is much greater: for then, in some shape or other, it must come out of their pockets. With these considerations you will not fail to join others of a higher nature: that sacred fabrics are appropriated to the noblest of uses, the worship of the great God; and to preserve or put them in a condition suitable to it

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is one very proper method of expressing and cherishing a sense of piety in their own minds, and spreading it through their families, neighbours and dependants; whereas, by suffering his house to be an object of contempt and scorn, while perhaps they spare nothing to beautify their own, they will be understood, and will tempt all around them, to despise the service performed there, and him to whom it is paid: that repairing and embellishing their churches will employ the poor full as beneficially, as adorning their seats and gardens, and procure them a much better grounded, and more general, esteem. Indeed it is surprising, that noblemen and gentlemen will squander vast sums in the gratification of private luxury and vanity, for which more condemn than applaud them; and not consider, that much smaller sums bestowed on public works, especially in honour of religion, would gain them the admiration of a whole country; and the peculiar blessing of many, whom they would thus ease from burthens: besides that they might shew their good taste, if that be the favourite point with them, no less in one way than the other. But even Heathen writers have observed long ago, that expensive personal indulgence, and mean spirited parsimony in what regards the community, are often companions, and always ill symptoms (*d*).

But you may press the obligation of repairing and ornamenting yet more strongly, both on such of the nobility and gentry, and on such colleges and ecclesiastical persons or bodies, as are impropriators: and likewise on the lessees of these latter; because they have a more beneficial interest in the estate, than the lessors. Being possessed of the greater share of what was originally given for the support of the service and the fabric, they are bound at least in conscience, to take care of both, if it be needful: but of one part of the fabric, the chancel, they are indisputably bound by law to take care. And yet too commonly even those amongst them, who should be the most attentive to this point, strangely neglect it; or throw it on their tenants, who they know will of course neglect it; and concern themselves no farther. So their chancels are only in such sort of repair, as their barns and out-houses. Now handsome benefactions to put them in a better condition, given from time to time, and especially when good fines are received, would shew piety and generosity at once; would abate the unjust envy and hatred, to which academical and ecclesiastical owners of estates are liable; and set an example, which others might probably imitate.

I have already said, in speaking of chancels, that the ornaments of sacred places ought not to be light and gaudy, but modest and grave. Amongst these, a very proper one, of the cheaper kind, is writing on the walls chosen sentences of Scripture. This was done as early as the 4th century (*e*): but in process of time ceased to be done, at least in the vulgar tongue: and being restored at the reformation, was forbidden, as promoting that cause, by Bishop *Bonner* in Queen *Mary*'s reign (*f*). It not only diversifies the walls very agreeably and decently, but affords useful matter for meditation to the people, before the service begins; and may afford them useful admonition, when their eyes and thoughts are

(*d*) *Cic. pro Flacco. Hor. Od.* l. 2, 15. *Sat.* l. 2. 2. 103, 104, 105.
(*e*) *Bingh.* viii. 8, 3. (*f*) *Wilkins*, vol. iv. p. 108.

are wandring in the courſe of it. For theſe reaſons, I preſume, the 82d Canon directs, that ſuch ſentences be written in convenient places; and likewiſe, that the ten commandments be ſet upon the eaſt end of every church and chapel: to which undoubtedly the creed and Lord's prayer, though not mentioned in the Canon, are very fit companions.

You muſt alſo endeavour, that ſuch care may be taken of the furniture of the church, and whatever is uſed in it, as the Canons and Rubrics and the nature of the thing require: that the ſurplice be originally of proper linen, and kept clean, and renewed before it becomes contemptible by age: that the Bible and Prayer Books be whole and unſullied, and well bound: that the veſſels for the celebration of both the ſacraments, and the cover of the holy table, but more eſpecially the bread and wine placed upon it, be ſuitable in all reſpects to the ſolemnity: not ſuch as may give diſguſt to the more delicate, and tempt them to abhor, as the Scripture expreſſion is, *the offering of the Lord* (*g*). Theſe are, in their kind, points of importance: and ſuch as you may for the moſt part eaſily carry. Another thing, worthy of notice, is the condition of your church-yards. I take it for granted, though I am afraid I forgot to name it, that you keep thoſe, which belong to yourſelves, neat and decent: not turning in cattle to defile them and trample down the grave-ſtones; and make conſecrated ground ſuch, as you would not ſuffer courts before your own doors to be; but taking the profits of the herbage in ſuch manner, as may rather add beauty to the place. And I hope, where a church-yard belongs to an impropriator, you will do your beſt to get the ſame reſpect paid it; and to whomſoever it belongs, the fences well kept up.

If, in any or all of the particulars, which I have ſpecified, your repreſentations will be leſs offenſively introduced, or your attempts be of more weight, for your being able to ſay, that I directed you to make them, I do hereby direct you accordingly; and deſire you to ſay I did. Nor ſhould you be contented with a tranſient mention of the ſubject one or twice; but where there is any hope, return it on proper occaſions, and try the force of modeſt importunity. If, after competent trial, you find no effect, you muſt urge the church-wardens to preſent what is amiſs, if they will do no more. Indeed ſuch things as belong to their own care, they ſhould not preſent, but amend: and the Canons require, not the former, but the latter. Only when they have not time for the latter, the former is all they can do: and when they have, it is better than doing nothing. For it gives notice, and furniſhes room for admonitions and injunctions. If there be need, here again you muſt encourage them to preſent, by engaging to plead their cauſe with the pariſhioners. You may alſo ſafely promiſe them, that they ſhall ſuffer no oppreſſive or hard treatment, ſhall not be required to lay out upon any thing more than is fitting, and ſhall have reaſonable time allowed, even for that. I need not ſay, that both to qualify yourſelves for preſſing them to preſent, and on many other accounts, you muſt take effectual care, that nothing belonging to you be preſentable. Elſe they will have a ready anſwer for you: and it will be a ſad thing to ſtand in awe and be at the mercy of thoſe, who ought to reverence you. If you cannot prevail

(*g*) 1 *Sam.* ii. 17.

prevail on them otherwiſe, I apprehend you may join with them; and if you cannot prevail on them at all, I apprehend you may preſent without them, in the caſe of repairs, as well as offences, by virtue of the interpretation, which practice hath put on the abovementioned Canon: though it ſpeaks, I own, expreſsly of nothing beſides offences. But in doing either of theſe things, you muſt be ſure to obſerve the cautions given under the former head.

Yet after all, I am well aware, that you may often have great difficulties to encounter, poſſibly ſometimes too great to ſurmount. And to diminiſh them from you, I have endeavoured to procure a parochial viſitation from the Archdeacon, which he hath promiſed. But then, for the credit of your pariſhioners and your own, let this be an inducement to put things in good order, that he may find them ſo: not to leave them in bad order, that he may rectify them.

Another very uſeful inſtitution, for theſe and many valuable purpoſes, was that of rural Deans: which took place here before the conqueſt, was kept up till the great rebellion, was reſtored afterwards in ſeveral Dioceſes, and particularly in this by the admirable Biſhop *Fell* (*h*), was found not quite extinct and was completely revived by the late excellent Biſhop of *Glocester* (*i*), in that county, and is preſerved to this day in ſame parts of the nation beſides. Theſe Deans, being choſen out of the reſident parochial Clergy, could inſpect, with ſmall trouble, the churches and pariſhes within their ſeveral narrow diſtricts; and being bound to report what they found amiſs, could do it with little or no offence. In the latter end of Queen *Anne*'s, and the beginning of the late King's reign, the convocation made ſome progreſs towards the re-eſtabliſhment and better regulation of this office. When that, or any other branch of diſcipline, may be the ſubject of public conſideration again, is very uncertain. I ſhould be very glad, with your approbation, to ſet it up once more amongſt us, in ſuch form as might be moſt beneficial and ſatisfactory: but contented at preſent with hinting the matter, I leave and recommend it to your ſerious thoughts.

A third particular, of conſiderable importance, in which you are jointly concerned with the church-wardens, is the keeping of the regiſter book. The 70th Canon directs, that it be of parchment: and though an act of Parliament, lately paſſed, allows marriages to be regiſtred in a paper book; yet parchment is far more durable: nor is the difference of expence worth regarding, as it returns ſo ſeldom. This book ſhould be ſtrongly bound, and not over large; leſt it ſhould be worn and damaged, before it is filled. For the ſafe preſervation of it, and doubtleſs of all preceding books of the ſame kind, the Canon orders, that a cheſt be provided with three locks and keys; one for you, one for each of the church-wardens, who are ordinarily two; and that on Sundays, if there hath been any chriſtening, marriage or burial, in the week before, it ſhall be entred there. I am afraid it is ſeldom thus kept: and yet there would be no great trouble in it, after a little uſe. Or where that is otherwiſe, either the miniſter or a church-warden ſhould keep it; and each of them ſhould ſee from time to time, how it is kept.

The

(*h*) *Kennet.* Paroch. Ant. p. 653. (*i*) Biſhop *Benſon.*

The entries, if they cannot well be made every Sunday, ſhould be made very frequently, and in the mean time the miniſter, if he hath not the book, ſhould take memorandums. He is the perſon directed to write in it, and uſually much the fitteſt. But if, through any accident, that happens not to be ſo, he ſhould appoint a proper perſon, and ſuperintend him. The names and ſurnames of the parents ought to be added, in regiſtring not only baptiſms, where it is enjoined, but marriages and burials too, as far as may be: for it may prevent doubts and diſputes. It will alſo be very uſeful, to put down the day of the birth and death of each perſon, as well as of the baptiſm and burial. The late act above-mentioned hath directed farther, that every page of the regiſter of marriages be numbered, to diſcover if any leaf be afterwards cut out; and ruled with lines at equal diſtances, to diſcover if any article be afterwards put in. And you will do very well to obſerve the ſame precautions in regiſtring baptiſms and burials. When a page is filled, the Canon requires the miniſter and church-wardens to ſubſcribe their names; which they ſhould do juſt below the laſt line. And if this be not done immediately, it may without any inconvenience be done ſoon after: and was done by me and the church-wardens, for many years, in one of the moſt populous pariſhes of the kingdom. Laſtly the Canon requires, that an atteſted copy of this book be annually tranſmitted to the Biſhop's regiſtry, received without fee, and faithfully preſerved there: and it authorizes me to proceed againſt thoſe, who are negligent about any of its directions. I muſt therefore both intreat and inſiſt, that you inquire in what condition your old and your preſent regiſter books are, and get them kept for the future as they ought. I have more than once been put under great difficulties in ordinations, for want of exactneſs in the regiſter of baptiſms. That of marriages is of ſo great concern, that altering it deſignedly to eſtabliſh or void a marriage, is by the act above-mentioned made felony. In all caſes the book, faithfully kept, is good evidence: and falſifying it is puniſhable at common law. I would only obſerve farther on this head, that in the preamble of a bill, which paſſed the Houſe of Commons this laſt ſeſſion, and had a ſecond reading in the Houſe of Lords, it was aſſerted as notorious, that "great inconveniences have ariſen from the preſent defective manner, in which parochial "regiſters are formed; and the looſe and uncertain method, in which "they are kept and preſerved; whereby the evidence of deſcents is frequently loſt and rendered precarious." So far as this may be fact, it will be moſt for our honour to amend it, without the interpoſition of the legiſlature.

A fourth point, of which I hope you will think yourſelves bound, if not by law, yet in conſcience, to take a joint care with the church-wardens, is that of parochial charities. The miniſter is the repreſentative of the church, intruſted with its intereſts; and you ought to endeavour, that ſuch benefactions be firſt preſerved, and then applied in a proper manner.

If it be doubtful, whether ſuch or ſuch a donation hath been given to your church or poor, or the ſupport of a ſchool in your pariſh, you will make proper inquiry concerning the matter. If it be given by any writing, you will procure that writing, or an atteſted copy of it, to be laid

up ſafely, either in the pariſh cheſt, or the Biſhop's regiſtry; indeed a copy in each place would be beſt; and an account of the gift ſhould be inſerted in your pariſh book. For if deeds are left in private hands, and eſpecially without authentic notice where they are left, they are ſometimes deſignedly ſuppreſſed; and often undeſignedly deſtroyed or loſt, through the ignorance or careleſſneſs of the perſons poſſeſſed of them. It will alſo be very proper, to have a table, mentioning the charity, hung up in your church; that a grateful remembrance of the benefactors may be continued to poſterity, and others incited to follow their good example; as a paper of directions drawn up by the lower houſe of convocation in 1710, hath well expreſſed it (*k*). If the benefaction be an eſtate veſted in truſtees, it will be very material to get the truſt renewed in due time; elſe in all likelihood there will be expence, if not danger; and to truſtees of as good credit and ability, as poſſible. They muſt likewiſe be warned, never to let out ſuch lands on long leaſes, or at very low rents, in favour of any body: but to raiſe the rents when they can; at leaſt to vary them, which will make it eaſy to raiſe them, when there is opportunity: otherwiſe it will ſoon be pretended, that they have no right to raiſe them; of which there are ſome unhappy inſtances in this Dioceſe. If the gift be in money, you muſt preſs to have it placed in the public funds, in caſe it be conſiderable enough; or elſe in the beſt private hands, and on the beſt ſecurity that can be obtained; paying no regard in ſuch caſes to perſonal friendſhips; and being particularly careful, that pariſh officers do not keep it in their own cuſtody. If they do, the intereſt will uſually be paid out of the public money, and moſt probably the principal will be loſt in a few years.

But charities are preſerved in vain, unleſs they are well applied: and they are often ſadly miſapplied. Gifts to the church, where it is not otherwiſe expreſſed, muſt be ſuppoſed intended for beautifying the church: elſe it will be never the better for ſuch gifts: for it will be equally repaired without them: the pariſhioners are bound to that: and the chief of the burthen uſually falls upon the richeſt, for whoſe relief charities were certainly not intended. And yet ſuch benefactions are too commonly employed, not only in mere repairs, but in what hath no connection with the fabric; in providing bread and wine for the communion, in paying church-wardens bills for all ſorts of things, it may be for extravagant and riotous entertainments amongſt the reſt, in eaſing the poors rates, in I know not what; and the church all the time, inſtead of being any way improved, ſuffered to grow dirty and even ruinous. A lamentable abuſe of this kind, (where a ſteeple fell down, and was in part rebuilt by contribution, while an eſtate, more than ſufficient to have kept the whole building in good order and beauty, was perverted to other uſes) I have taken much pains to rectify, but fear it is not throughly rectified yet. Again, gifts to the poor were certainly intended for the benefit of the poor; to make proviſion for ſuch of them, as are not on the pariſh lift, or a better proviſion for ſuch as are. And yet they are ſometimes embezzled and ſquandered, in a great meaſure, if not wholly; ſometimes beſtowed to ſerve private or party purpoſes: and very commonly ſink into the legal rate; ſo the wealthy are benefited; and the

(*k*) See *Wilkins*, vol. iv. p. 638.

the needy have not a farthing more, than if nothing had been given for them.

I know it is not always eaſy, perhaps not always poſſible for you, to remedy theſe ill practices. But a great part of the blame will be laid on you, right or wrong, unleſs you try to remedy them. And it may prove leſs difficult than you imagine. Church-wardens and overſeers perhaps are ignorant, or going on thoughtleſsly, and would be thankful to you for good advice: or however would be ruled by it, on your repreſenting to them the heinouſneſs of robbing God or the poor; and the honour it will do them, and the conſolation it will afford them, to have put things into a right channel. Or ſuppoſing them backward to comply, you may be able to get conſiderable perſons in the pariſh or neighbourhood to ſecond you. At leaſt you will get the reputation of a moſt laudable zeal, and if you conduct that zeal aright, of diſcretion alſo: and theſe together may produce unexpected ſucceſs; eſpecially where the abuſe is not yet become inveterate. But if nothing elſe will do, and the caſe be plain, and the object of ſufficient importance: recourſe ſhould be had to the authority of the law; and you ſhould be willing to bear a proportion of the charges, if it be requiſite and you are able; only taking the ſtricteſt care to proceed with mildneſs and fairneſs.

I have now finiſhed the courſe of directions to you, which I began 15 years ago. And as I can truly ſay, that in this and every part of my behaviour as your Biſhop, I have, through the Divine aſſiſtance, diligently laboured, to do my duty with uprightneſs, and promote your good and that of your pariſhioners, preſent and future; ſo I hope you will accept my endeavours with candour, and ſtudy to profit by them; excuſing my failings, which I know have been many, and will now be too likely to increaſe. I am advancing apace into the decline of age. Three of my brethren (*l*), my oldeſt and beſt friends, have gone before me in leſs than twelve months. I muſt expect to follow them ſoon. Whether I may live, or, if I live, whether I may be able, to meet you thus again, God only can foreſee. May he grant us to meet in a better world.

But before I conclude, permit me to ſubjoin, to theſe general admonitions, a few words concerning two particular occurrences.

In the firſt place I return you my hearty thanks for the pains, which you have taken in behalf of the Society for propagating the Goſpel. The collection hath upon the whole been made very ſucceſsfully throughout the kingdom; and amounts to almoſt 19000*l.* if not more: whereas ten years ago it fell ſhort of 15000*l.* But I believe the contribution of this county hath been in proportion the largeſt of any. The laſt time it was barely 300*l.*; nor was that to be accounted ſmall; and now it is very near 500*l.*: I mean in both caſes excluſive of the Univerſity: which diſtinguiſhed itſelf very honourably then, and I doubt not, will at preſent. May God increaſe, and bleſs, and reward the zeal of all his ſervants every where for ſupporting, and enlarging the kingdom of his Son, and making the confeſſion of his Name effectual to the ſalvation of mankind.

The other ſubject, on which I would ſpeak to you, is the conteſt about repreſentatives

(*l*) Biſhops *Butler*, *Benſon*, and *Berkeley*.

repreſentatives for this county in the next Parliament. Let no one be alarmed. I need not, and I do not mean, to give you at a meeting of this nature, my opinion which of the candidates you ought to prefer: of that I ſay no more here than that you ought to regard, in the firſt place, the inſeparable intereſt of the excellent church we are members of, and, its only human ſupport, the juſt and gracious government we live under; then other ſubordinate conſiderations. My purpoſe is merely to exhort you, *(and I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation)* (*m*) that on this occaſion, *your converſation be ſuch, as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt:* in doing which, I have neither one party, nor one perſon amongſt you, more in my view than another: but, if I may uſe the Apoſtle's words, *am jealous with a godly jealouſy over you all* (*n*). I cannot indeed ſuppoſe, that any of you would be guilty of the groſſer faults too common at ſuch times, or any wilful wrong behaviour. But in the midſt of ſo many claſhings, provocations, and diſappointments, as will happen, ſo many miſtakes and miſrepreſentations as ariſe one knows not how; the incitements to uncharitable and contemptuous thoughts, to unadviſed and injurious words, in anger or in mirth, nay to unkind and hard and even unjuſt actions, are very great, and the beſt of us all ſhould be continually ſuggeſting to our minds proper cautions for avoiding theſe dangers. Elſe we ſhall fall into ſin againſt God and our neighbour: we ſhall loſe the eſteem of part of thoſe whoſe improvement by us depends on their eſteeming us; and ſet a bad inſtead of a good example to the reſt. Let every one of us therefore be very watchful over our conduct: or if we have not been ſo, let us amend it: and if we find preſerving our innocence difficult, let us meddle the leſs with theſe matters: for indeed being over buſy about them is not very ſuitable to our function. But while we are ſtrict with ourſelves, let us be very mild in regard to others, whom we think to have done amiſs: we may blame them without cauſe; or if we do not, it is eaſy to err; and we, amongſt others, are ſadly liable to faults. But let us be eſpecially mild towards our own brethren. For why ſhould we diminiſh our little remaining ſtrength by inteſtine diſſenſions, and teach yet more perſons to think ill or meanly of us, than do already? Surely the common cauſe of religion and virtue, which we are jointly intruſted to ſupport, ſhould have infinitely greater force to unite us, than any thing elſe to divide us.

Next to yourſelves, you will ſtudy to preſerve as many of your pariſhioners as poſſible, from the ſins *that ſo eaſily beſet them* at theſe ſeaſons of epidemical unreaſonableneſs and licentiouſneſs. Thoſe, who are of your own ſide, you may counſel and reprove more freely. With the reſt you muſt be extremely calm and patient: take the moſt favourable opportunities, and uſe the moſt perſuaſive methods of ſpeaking: but in ſome way or other, private or public, all, who need it, ſhould be told, *whether they will hear or whether they will forbear*, that the great Chriſtian laws of dutifulneſs to ſuperiors, mutual good-will, forbearance, forgiveneſs, equity, veracity, moderation, ſobriety, loſe not the leaſt of their obligation during the continuance of theſe diſputes: that all virtues are to be chiefly exerciſed, when they are chiefly tried: and that therefore now

(*m*) Heb. xiii. 22. (*n*) 2 Cor. xi. 2.

now more particularly, you, as the Apoſtle directs, muſt *put them in mind*, and they muſt keep in mind, *to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates, to be ready to every good work, to ſpeak evil of no man, to be no brawlers but gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs unto all men* (*o*). I end this long diſcourſe in the words of the ſame Apoſtle: *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are venerable,* (for ſo the word is rightly tranſlated in the margin) *whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praiſe, think of* and do *theſe things: and the God of peace ſhall be with you* (*p*).

(*o*) Tit. iii. 1, 2. (*p*) Phil. iv. 8, 9.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

CANTERBURY,

In the YEAR 1758.

Reverend Brethren,

THE Diſpoſer of all things having permitted his Majeſty, by the advice of his faithful ſervants, to nominate me for your Biſhop: though I ſaw many reaſons to dread this promotion, ariſing from the difficulties of the office and of the times, from the great qualities of my predeceſſors, and my own increaſing weakneſſes; yet I thought myſelf bound to obey his commands, and with the ſame gratitude for his favourable opinion, as if I had wiſhed to receive them: determining, through God's grace, to perform the duties of my ſtation as well as I could; and hoping for the candor, the aſſiſtance and the prayers of good people. To make ſome amends by diligence for my deficiencies in other

reſpects, I reſolved immediately to viſit my Dioceſe: for which purpoſe we are here aſſembled.

Theſe meetings were deſigned, partly to give the Clergy opportunities of conferring with each other, and conſulting their ſuperiors, on matters relating to their profeſſion; and I am very deſirous, that you ſhould render them as beneficial in this way, as poſſible: but principally, to give Biſhops opportunities of exhorting and cautioning their Clergy, either on ſuch general ſubjects as are always uſeful, or on ſuch particular occaſions as the circumſtances of things, or the inquiries, made at or againſt theſe times, point out; and of interpoſing their authority, if there be need; which, amongſt you, I am perſuaded, there will not. To provide more fully for your inſtruction, I have ordered a Charge to be ſent you, which I delivered to the Clergy of *Oxfordſhire*, and printed at their requeſt, about twenty years ago. Would God it were become unſeaſonable now. But, as unhappily it is not, I earneſtly recommend the contents of it to your moſt ſerious thoughts: and would have you look on what I ſhall at preſent ſay further, as ſupplemental to it.

Counſels and admonitions to parochial miniſters pre-ſuppoſe their reſidence. The founders of pariſhes provided them with glebes, and built houſes for them, purpoſely that they might reſide. The laws of the church have from the beginning, and do ſtill require, as indeed common equity doth, that this valuable conſideration, for which theſe endowments were given, ſhould be faithfully paid. And going over and performing the ſervice from time to time, or engaging ſome other clergyman to take care of it, or of the occaſional part of it, ſeldom anſwers the original intention. Your people will not ſo readily, and cannot ſo conveniently apply to the miniſter of another pariſh: and when they do, his aſſiſtance, for the moſt part, will be leſs early, or leſs conſtant, than it ſhould: though doubtleſs they, who have undertaken to ſupply their neighbours abſence, ought to do it very conſcientiouſly. But beſides, even the Sunday-duty, when the incumbent unneceſſarily comes from a diſtant place to do it, will be conſidered as accompanied with ſomething like a breach of the Sunday, will not always be kept to the ſtated hours, will often be hurried over indecently: the catechiſm will either not be taught or not expounded, if the diſtance be at all conſiderable; nor probably will the ſermon be well adapted to the audience. For it is only living amongſt your people, and knowing them throughly, that can ſhew you, what is level to their capacities, and ſuited to their circumſtances; what will reform their faults, and improve their hearts in true goodneſs. Yet this is your buſineſs with them: and unleſs you perform it, every thing elſe is nothing. Further, ſuch as want your help moſt may not come to your ſermons, or may not apply them to their own caſe, or may need to have them enforced by conſiderations peculiar to themſelves, and unfit to be ſpecified in public. Speaking to them ſeparately, and agreeably to their ſeveral ſtates of mind and life, may have unforeſeen influence. And being always at hand, to awe the diſorderly and countenance the well-behaved, to adviſe and comfort the diſeaſed and afflicted, to relieve or procure relief for the neceſſitous, to compoſe little differences and diſcourage wrong cuſtoms in the beginning, to promote friendly

offices, and keep up an edifying and entertaining converſation in a neighbourhood, muſt add incredible weight to public inſtruction.

Indeed your congregations expect theſe things from you, and have a right to expect them. The nature of your office requires them: you have all at your ordination expreſsly promiſed to *uſe both public and private monitions and exhortations, both to the ſick and whole within your cures, as need ſhall require and occaſion be given, the Lord being your helper.* Now we cannot uſe them duly, without being reſident. But further ſtill, ſince their ordination, all vicars have ſworn particularly to be reſident unleſs they are diſpenſed with, which means by lawful authority: nor doth any diſpenſation of a Biſhop laſt beyond his own time; or beyond the term, for which he gave it; or, if that were indefinite, beyond his pleaſure: points, which vicars ought to conſider much more ſeriouſly, than they often do. And every rector hath ſworn in general, to *obey* his Biſhop *in all things lawful and honeſt.* Now ſurely reſidence is lawful and honeſt: and what is puniſhable by a Biſhop may, if done without his leave, be well interpreted diſobedience to him: and the non-reſidence of rectors is puniſhable juſt in the ſame manner with that of vicars.

It muſt not therefore be pleaded, that however neceſſary the reſidence of ſome miniſter may be, that of a curate may ſuffice. For your engagement is, not merely that the ſeveral duties of your pariſh ſhall be done, but that you perſonally will do them: and if it were enough to ſubſtitute another to do them, a layman would be, in point of reaſon and conſcience, as capable of holding a benefice, as a man in holy orders. Beſides, a curate will uſually have leſs knowledge and leſs experience, than the incumbent: and he and the pariſhioners will conceive, that they are leſs related to each other. He will conſider himſelf, as being with them only for an uncertain, and he may hope, a ſhort time; which will tempt him to neglect them. And they will conſider him, as not the perſon, who hath authority over them; which will tempt them to diſregard him: eſpecially as the largeſt ſalary, that can be legally appointed, or generally afforded to a curate, will not enable him to recommend himſelf to them by doing good amongſt them in any expenſive way: whilſt yet the people will think, and juſtly too, that the whole income of the benefice was intended to procure them a miniſter, to do them as much good in every way, as could reaſonably be expected from it.

There are indeed caſes, in which the law diſpenſes with holding two livings, and by conſequence allows abſence from one. But perſons ought to conſider well; ſuppoſing they can with innocence take the benefit of that law; whether they can do it on other terms, than their diſpenſation and their bond expreſſes, of preaching yearly 13 ſermons, and keeping two months hoſpitality, in the pariſh, where they reſide leaſt. For the leave given them on theſe conditions, is not intended to be given them, however legally valid, if the conditions are neglected: always excepting where juſt impediments happen. There are likewiſe caſes, in which the non-reſidence of perſons, who have only one living, is permitted by law. But ſome of theſe alſo are put under limitations, beyond which the permiſſion doth not reach.

Further ſtill, I am ſenſible, that conſiderations of health and ſtrength, and particular circumſtances of incumbents or their families, require

leave

leave of abſence to be ſometimes allowed, where the law makes no allowance. But then it ſhould never be taken for any conſiderable time, without being aſked: nor ſhould it be aſked without good cauſe. And mere fancy, or deſire of living more at eaſe, or in a cheerfuller, and, it may be, leſs clerical manner, is by no means a ſufficient cauſe. Nor indeed is the allegation of health to be urged too far, or to be too much regarded. For places, called unwholeſome, prove upon trial very wholeſome to many perſons: and thoſe, which are leaſt ſo, muſt have ſome miniſters in or near them; and whom rather, generally ſpeaking, than ſuch as enjoy the whole profits? Much leſs is indulgence to be granted for every preſent convenience, or proſpect of temporal advantage: which if clergymen appear to have greatly at heart, and the care of their pariſhes but little, indeed it looks very ill.

Another plea may be offered by ſome, that though they live not on their own cures, they ſerve others. And it is not always an inſufficient one. But, with very few exceptions, the moſt natural and moſt uſeful method by far is, that each take the overſight of the pariſh, which properly belongs to him: and abſenting himſelf from that, for a little more income, a little more agreeableneſs, or any ſlight reaſon, is unbecoming and unwarrantable behaviour.

At the ſame time I acknowledge, that the poorneſs of ſome benefices makes the reſidence of a diſtinct miniſter upon each of them impracticable: and therefore they muſt be ſerved from an adjoining pariſh, or a greater diſtance; and no more duty expected, than there is a competent proviſion for. But then I fear, indeed I have found, that in ſome benefices, not ſo poor, one miniſter ſupplies two churches on a Sunday; contrary to a repeated injunction of ſucceſſive Archbiſhops to their ſuffragans, which they certainly deſigned to obſerve themſelves; and the words of which are theſe; *that you do not allow any miniſter to ſerve more than one church or chapel in one day, except that chapel be a member of the pariſh church; or united thereunto; and unleſs the ſaid church or chapel be not able to maintain a curate.* The conſequence of diſregarding this injunction is, not only a very bad one, that the ſervice is performed in irreverent haſte, but that catechiſing is neglected in both places, if not altogether, yet in a great degree. Nay, perhaps for great part of the year, if not the whole, each of them hath prayers but once. Where indeed it can be truly alledged in this laſt caſe, that the inhabitants of each pariſh not only with convenience may, but actually do, attend at both churches, the plea muſt he allowed its weight. But, as to other excuſes: if the number of the people be ſmall, the ſervice is not leſs enjoined, and is more eaſily performed: if they had rather have a ſermon at another church, than merely prayers at their own; they ought to have more than prayers; an expoſition of the catechiſm, which they will account equivalent to a ſermon: or you may reduce it with eaſe into the form of a ſermon; and then many of them will come to their own church, who now go to no other, but profane the reſt of the day: if they are content with part of the Sunday ſervice, which however may be ſaid or believed without ſufficient ground, yet probably they would be glad of the whole. But ſuppoſing them to be indifferent about it, or even averſe from it, their miniſter is bound to ſhew them, that they

ought not. And how long ſoever this hath been the practice; if it ought not to have been ſo at all, the longer the worſe. My pious and learned predeceſſor, Archbiſhop *Potter*, lamented heavily to me the irregularities of this kind, which he found in this Dioceſe: and if any remain, I muſt, after his example, endeavour to have them rectified.

I hope they will be rectified by the beſt method, beyond compariſon; your own ſerious reflections on what you owe to your flocks, and what you owe to the great Shepherd of ſouls. Though you are ever ſo expreſsly permitted by human laws to be abſent from your cures, or by your ordinary to ſerve them, or let them be ſerved, by halves; you are anſwerable to an infinitely higher tribunal for what God, and not man alone, hath made your duty. Therefore, if you regard the peace of your own ſouls and your final comfort, you will never do any of theſe things, unleſs very ſtrong reaſons oblige you to it: and you will never be glad of ſuch reaſons, but heartily ſorry. You will give your pariſhes both morning and evening prayer, wherever it is poſſible; and you will ſupply them in perſon, unleſs particular circumſtances render it impracticable, or unleſs, by living at a diſtance for the preſent, you are more uſeful to religion ſome other way, and peculiarly qualified for that uſefulneſs. Far from catching at weak pretences, you will be rather diffident about ſtrong inducements; and much readier to follow the directions, than ſolicit the indulgence of your ſuperiors. But if any do chuſe the worſe part, they muſt remember, that we Biſhops are bound to oppoſe, inſtead of conſulting their inclinations, from concern for them, as well as their pariſhioners. And therefore you will not ſurely think it real good-nature to connive at liberties of this kind preſumptuouſly taken without leave, or to grant requeſts made for them, as matters of courſe: nor impute it to a fondneſs of exerciſing power, when compliance with the rules of the church is required: nor yet haſtily condemn it, as partial behaviour, if an indulgence, denied to one, is granted to another: for there may be, in the caſes of different perſons, conſiderable diſparities, unknown to you, or unobſerved by you.

But when it is ever ſo clear, that the non-reſidence of miniſters ought to be allowed, it is at leaſt equally clear, that they ſhould uſe their beſt endeavours to make their people amends for it. One thing, proper to be done for this end, is relieving their poor: which as they could not with decency avoid doing, according to their ability, if they lived amongſt them, they ought to do more largely, if they live elſewhere. For no reproach will lie heavier on our order, than that of reaping all, and ſowing nothing: whereas, they who give alms in their abſence, will be in effect always preſent to one valuable purpoſe: will be readily preſumed to be well-wiſhers to their pariſhes in every way; whilſt they are benefactors to them in this way: and by ſuch a ſpecimen of the influence of religion upon themſelves, will remind their congregations, very acceptably, of the influence which it ought to have upon them; eſpecially if they make their charity more directly ſubſervient to religion, by affording diſtinguiſhed encouragement to pious and virtuous perſons, and thoſe who appear likely to be made ſuch; by procuring children to be inſtructed in their Chriſtian duty, and other proper knowledge; by diſtributing uſeful books amongſt the needy and ignorant. What is thus beſtowed,

ſtowed, is of all the ſervice it can be: whereas injudicious bounty may even produce harm.

Another thing, incumbent on ſuch as cannot reſide conſtantly, is to inſpect however the ſtate of their pariſhes as frequently as they can: ſpending days, or weeks, or longer ſeaſons there occaſionally; and in proportion as their time is ſhorter, uſing more diligence in public and private inſtructions and warnings. For they are peculiarly bound to do what they are able, who are not able to do what elſe they ought. But if even this be out of their power, they may at leaſt be aſſiduous in getting informations from perſons of underſtanding and ſerioufneſs, in or near their cures, with what regularity, with what ſpirit and zeal, each part of the parochial duty is performed; whether true inward piety makes any progreſs; whether any and what abuſes and neglects are crept in. And he, who reckons it enough, that, for ought he knows to the contrary, his pariſhioners go on like their neighbours, hath by no means the requiſite concern for their ſouls, or his own.

But whenever abſence is neceſſary, or the largeneſs of a pariſh, or the infirmity of a miniſter, hinders him from taking the whole care of it perſonally, the principal point is, the choice of a fit ſubſtitute, to be employed in his ſtead, or ſhare his burthen: for no ſuperintendency will make an unfit one anſwer the end. And therefore I charge it upon your conſciences, not to ſuffer cheapneſs, recommendation of friends, affection to this or that perſon or place of education, in ſhort any inducement whatever, to weigh near ſo much with you, as the benefit of your people, in chuſing perſons to ſerve your churches. For on you the choice of them lies in the firſt place: but not on you alone. The laws of the church require, particularly Can. 48, that *no curate or miniſter be permitted to ſerve in any place, without examination and admiſſion of the ordinary*: in conſequence of which, one of the before-mentioned archiepiſcopal directions to the ſuffragans of the province, is this: *That you make diligent inquiry concerning curates in your Dioceſe: and proceed to eccleſiaſtical cenſures againſt thoſe, who ſhall preſume to ſerve cures, without being firſt duly licenſed thereunto; as alſo againſt all incumbents, who ſhall receive and employ them without obtaining ſuch licence.* Yet I would avoid rigour in all caſes. The expence of a licence, by means of the ſtamps, may to ſome be rather inconvenient, and greater than the government perhaps intended: at leaſt, if they are likely to remove, and ſo repeat that expence, in a ſhort time. And ſuch curates I would excuſe: only deſiring them to conſider, what ſecurity of continuing in their ſtation, and receiving their ſalary, a licence brings them. But then you cannot think it right, that I ſhould be left in ignorance, who ſerves a church under my care, till I learn it by accident, or private inquiry, perhaps many months after; through which omiſſion, men of bad characters, men not in orders, may intrude; as there hath lately been a flagrant inſtance in this Dioceſe. I am far from looking on the paſt failures of giving notice, as deſigned negligence of your flocks, or diſreſpect to your ſuperiors. But I ſhall have cauſe both to think of them and treat them as ſuch, if continued after the warning, which I now give, that no one is to officiate ſtatedly, or employ another to officiate ſo, within my juriſdiction, unleſs he firſt obtain my conſent; or what in effect will be mine, that of your very worthy

worthy and vigilant Archdeacon. Think not, I beg you, that this is taking more on myself, than my predecessors did. Their own directions prove, that they would have done the same thing, if they had seen the same necessity. Far be it from me to *lord it over God's heritage* (*a*): but I am bound to *keep that which is committed to my trust* (*b*).

When you want curates, I recommend it to you, first to inquire after persons of merit, already ordained, and if possible ordained priests, taking care to see their orders, as well as to examine into their characters, before you think of granting nominations to others. The number of clergymen indeed is rather deficient, than superfluous. But still one would not add to it by overlooking undeservedly those who are of it already. And particularly where help is wanted only for a short time, I shall insist on this point: nor will, without absolute necessity, ordain any one upon such a title. And if fraudulent titles are brought merely to procure orders, as I hope I shall discover them soon enough to disallow them, so I shall be sure to remark and remember, who hath attempted to impose upon me by them.

The next thing to be considered in relation to curates is, their testimonials. And here the Canon and directions already quoted enjoin, that no Bishop *admit such as remove out of another Diocese to serve in his, without the testimony in writing of the Bishop of that Diocese, or ordinary of the peculiar jurisdiction, from whence they come, of their good life, ability, and conformity to the ecclesiastical laws of the church of England.* For the clergymen of one Diocese, or jurisdiction, at least their hand-writing, being usually unknown to the Bishop of another, he can seldom, of himself, be sure, either that he hath their genuine testimony, or how far he may trust it. Therefore it is fit, that he should desire the attestation of their proper superior. And even to this it will be prudent to add such further information, as can be got: considering how very carelessly testimonials are sometimes granted, even by reputable persons.

But let me intreat you never to be guilty of such carelessness yourselves, for whatever purpose one is asked of you. Both the nature of the thing, and the directions repeatedly mentioned, require, that no Bishop *accept any letters testimonial, unless it be declared by those who shall sign them, that they have personally known*, not only the man, but *his life and conversation, for the time by them certified; and do believe in their conscience, that he is qualified for that order, office or employment, which he desires.* Now testimonials, concerning such things as these, cannot be matter of mere form, unless our whole profession be a very empty form. We, the Bishops to whom they are given, do not, and must not, understand them to be so: it would be absurd to demand them if we did. Some customs indeed may grow to be things of course; the reasons for them ceasing, or not being thought of moment; and yet the law for them continuing. But the reasons for testimonials can never cease, or be thought of small moment. They are the only ordinary information that we have, in a case of the utmost importance, in which we have a right to be informed. For no one can imagine, that we are to ordain and employ whoever comes, or depend on clandestine intelligence. We must therefore and do depend on regular testimonials. And if they be untrue, we are most injuriously

(*a*) 1 Pet. v. 3. (*b*) 1 Tim. vi. 20.

injuriouſly deceived by them: and all the miſchiefs, that follow from thence, will ſit heavy one day on the deceivers. But, even excluſively of this great conſideration, would you be chargeable with declaring a deliberate falſehood under your hand? Would you have unworthy men fill eccleſiaſtical ſtations, and exclude their betters? Would you have your Biſhop reproached, and your order vilified, through your fault? If not, remember, how utterly inconſiſtent with all concern for religion, with all veracity, probity and prudence it is, to ſign teſtimonials at random: how lamentable a ſort of clergy it will produce; how dreadful an encouragement to wickedneſs and profaneneſs it will prove. Remember alſo, that you expreſs in theſe inſtruments, not what you charitably hope a perſon will be; but what you actually know he hath been: not what others tell you at the end of the time, for which you vouch; but what you have ſeen and heard through the courſe of it: ſo that, if for a conſiderable part of the three years, commonly ſpecified, you have ſeen and heard nothing of him, for that part you can certify nothing about him. And remember laſtly, that though the affirmation of a perſon's having lived piouſly, ſoberly and honeſtly, comprehends a great deal, yet the concluding article, your belief of his fitneſs for what he deſires, implies a great deal more. For let him be ever ſo good and even learned a man, he cannot be fit for a clergyman, and the care of a pariſh, without competent gravity and diſcretion, and a voice and a manner ſuitable to a public aſſembly: of all which things they, that have had ſome familiarity with him, are uſually the beſt, if not the only judges. This part of the teſtimonial therefore is highly neceſſary: and every part of it muſt be well conſidered, before it is given; and no regard paid to neighbourhood, acquaintance, friendſhip, compaſſion, importunity, when they ſtand in competition with truth.

It may ſometimes be hard for you to refuſe your hand to improper perſons. But it is only one of the many hardſhips, which conſcience bids men undergo reſolutely, when they are called to them. It would be much harder, that your Biſhop ſhould be miſled, the church of God injured, and the poor wretch himſelf aſſiſted to invade ſacrilegiouſly an office, at the thought of which he hath cauſe to tremble. And if you fear he will be revenged on you for not yielding to him, this furniſhes an additional reaſon for denying him: for will you, or can you, ſay of ſuch a one, that he is qualified to be a miniſter of the Goſpel any where? But if the perſons, to whom candidates apply, would only make it a rule to meet, and act jointly on the occaſion, and keep ſecret the particulars of what paſſed, it might be unknown, from whom the denial proceeded. Or ſuppoſe it known, the reſentment of ſuch, as deſerve to be refuſed, will ſeldom do a worthy man much hurt: and a number of ſuch refuſals will do the public unſpeakable good. Indeed the expectation of a refuſal's following upon wrong behaviour will in a great degree prevent ſuch behaviour, and turn this whole difficulty into a pleaſure. But what is unavoidable with innocence, muſt be virtuouſly borne: and inſtead of ſubmitting to recommend unfit perſons, you ought, if others recommend them, which God forbid, to interpoſe immediate cautions againſt the danger, in all flagrant caſes. Still not every paſt fault, nor every preſent infirmity, ſhould be alledged, or allowed, as an impediment. But

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into an office, the moſt important of all others, none ſhould be admitted, who are void of the proper ſpirit, or a competent ſhare of the needful qualifications for it: and the leſs, becauſe, though we can refuſe to ordain them, we often cannot keep them back from very unſuitable ſtations, when once they are ordained.

After preſenting the title and teſtimonials, whether for orders, a curacy, or a living, follows the examination. For though the teſtimonial expreſſes an opinion, that the perſon is qualified; which may be very uſeful, to reſtrain ſuch from applying, as are notoriouſly unqualified; yet we Biſhops muſt not, eſpecially in the caſe of orders, reſt on a mere opinion; but aſſure ourſelves by a cloſer trial, whether he hath ſufficient knowledge of religion and the holy Scriptures to teach them in public, and apply them in private, and defend them againſt oppoſers: the two firſt of which are abſolutely neceſſary; the third, highly requiſite. As therefore on the one hand, I hope I never have been or ſhall be over ſtrict in this reſpect, and rejecting candidates will give me almoſt, if not quite, as much concern, as it can give them: ſo on the other, I muſt adhere to my duty; againſt all ſolicitations of friends, and all intreaties of the parties concerned, who little think what they do, when they preſs into ſuch an employment prematurely. I ſhew my regard to you, when I exclude unqualified perſons out of your number: and I ſhall never doubt your candid interpretation of my conduct; nor indeed your zeal to vindicate it, when you are acquainted with my reaſons, which any of you ſhall, who hath cauſe to aſk them. But that no injuſtice may be done to thoſe whom I poſtpone, any more than to myſelf: I beſeech you to conſider, and, if needful, to ſay in their behalf, that though deficient in knowledge, they may have a goodneſs of heart, more valuable than the higheſt knowledge: though not qualified yet, they may be, ſoon; may already have made a good progreſs, though not a ſufficient one; may indeed have more learning on the whole, than many who are admitted, only not have applied themſelves enough to theological learning.

Examination muſt occaſionally be repeated after perſons have been ordained. The 39th Canon requires it before inſtitution to benefices: therefore ſurely it is adviſable alſo before admiſſion to curacies. A man, who was fit to be ordained, may yet have become ſince, through negligence, or bodily indiſpoſition affecting his mind, unfit to be employed: or he may be capable ſtill of what he was ordained for, but not of what he applies for: or his ordainer, though ever ſo duly careful, may ſometimes have miſtaken, or been miſinformed: and if he hath chanced to be too indulgent, the bad effects of his indulgence ought to be prevented. Accordingly re-examination is common. My brethren the Biſhops, I am ſure, will not blame me for uſing it: and I truſt, you my brethren will not.

When a curate nominated hath been examined and approved, the next ſtep is, to appoint him a ſalary. And here I am very ſenſible, that what is far from a comfortable maintenance for life, may however be a tolerable competency at firſt: and likewiſe, that ſome benefices are ſo mean, and ſome incumbents in ſuch low circumſtances, or burthened with ſo numerous families, that they muſt be excuſed, if they endeavour to get

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help on as eaſy terms, as they well can. But if any miniſter, who hath either a large preferment, or two moderate ones, or a plentiful temporal income, tries to make a hard bargain with his brother, whom he employs; and is more ſolicitous to give the ſmalleſt ſalary poſſible, than to find the worthieſt perſon; it is matter of ſevere and juſt reproach: the friends of the Clergy will be ſcandalized at it; their enemies will take dreadful advantages of it; indeed the people in general, if we think a trifle enough for him that doth the work, will be apt to conceive it very needleſs, that he, who doth little or nothing, ſhould have a great deal more. For this reaſon therefore, amongſt incomparably weightier ones, it concerns you much, both to labour diligently, and to allow liberally. Accordingly I hope I ſhall never have the diſagreeable office thrown upon me of augmenting what is propoſed, but the ſatisfaction given me of confirming and applauding it.

But beſides making a reaſonable allowance, the miniſter of a pariſh ought to provide, with the kindeſt attention in all reſpects, for the convenience and accommodation, the credit and influence, of his curate: who is bound in return to conſult faithfully the miniſter's honour and intereſt in every thing; but above all, to be unwearied in that beſt proof of his gratitude, a conſcientious care of the ſouls committed to him; not proportioning his diligence to the poor recompence paid him here, but to the unſpeakable happineſs reſerved for good ſhepherds hereafter.

Indeed whether the principal or his repreſentative, or both reſide, their induſtry and fervency and prudence will be the meaſure of their people's benefit, and their own final acceptance. If you content yourſelves with a languid formal recital of ſtated offices, and by indolence, or amuſements, or buſineſs, or even ſtudies, are loſt to your pariſhioners, while you are in the midſt of them, or by indiſcretions in converſation, dreſs or demeanour, become diſliked or deſpiſed by them, you may, in reſpect of any ſpiritual uſefulneſs to them or yourſelves, be, almoſt as well, perhaps better, ever ſo far off. But this is no excuſe for being abſent, but only a reaſon for being preſent to good purpoſe. And as the non-reſidence of ſome, the unactive reſidence of others, and the offenſive conduct of a third ſort, (which cauſe great ſorrow, but moderate complaints amongſt wiſe and good people,) are favourite topics of invective againſt us, not only in the mouths of irreligious perſons, but of a new ſect pretending to the ſtricteſt piety; though we are bound always, we are peculiarly bound at preſent, to behave in ſo exemplary a manner, as will *cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion to glory* (*c*) of themſelves, and ſpeak evil of us. It is not *rendring* to them *railing for railing* (*d*); it is not ridiculing them, eſpecially in terms bordering on profaneneſs, or affecting more gravely to hold them in contempt; it is not doing them the honour of miſcalling other perſons of more than ordinary ſerioufneſs by their name, that will prevent the continuance or the increaſe of the harm, which they are doing. The only way is, for the Clergy to imitate and emulate what is good in them, avoiding what is bad: to attend their cures, edify their pariſhioners with awakening, but rational and ſcriptural, diſcourſes, converſe much with them, as *watchmen for their ſouls*

(*c*) 2 Cor. xi. 12. (*d*) 1 Pet. iii. 9.

ſouls (*e*), *be ſober, grave, temperate, and ſhew themſelves in all things patterns of good works* (*f*). If the people ſee, or but imagine, their miniſter unwilling to take more pains about them, or preſerve more guard upon himſelf than for ſhame he muſt, no wonder if it alienates them powerfully both from him and his doctrine: whereas when they perceive him careful to inſtruct them, and go before them, in whatever is their duty to do, they will hearken to him with great regard, when he cautions them againſt overdoing; and be unlikely to ſeek for imaginary improvements abroad from irregularities and extravagances, whilſt they experience themſelves really improved at home in an orderly eſtabliſhed method.

But then, to improve them effectually to their future happineſs, as well as to ſilence falſe accuſers, you muſt be aſſiduous in teaching the principles, not only of virtue and natural religion, but of the Goſpel: and of the Goſpel, not as almoſt explained away by modern refiners, but *as the truth is in Jeſus* (*g*); as it is taught by the church, of which you are members; as you have engaged, by your ſubſcriptions and declarations, that you will teach it yourſelves. You muſt preach to them faith in the ever-bleſſed Trinity: and vindicate, when it is requiſite, thoſe parts of our Creeds and offices which relate to that article, from the very unjuſt imputations of abſurdity and uncharitableneſs which have been caſt upon them. You muſt ſet forth the original corruption of our nature; our redemption, *according to God's eternal purpoſe in Chriſt* (*h*), by the ſacrifice of the croſs; our ſanctification by the influences of the Divine Spirit; the inſufficiency of our own good works, and the efficacy of faith to ſalvation: yet handling theſe points in a doctrinal, not controverſial manner, unleſs particularly called to it; and even then treating adverſaries with mildneſs and pity, not with bitterneſs or immoderate vehemence.

The truth, I fear, is, that many, if not moſt of us, have dwelt too little on theſe doctrines in our ſermons: and by no means, in general, from diſbelieving or ſlighting them; but partly from knowing, that formerly they had been inculcated beyond their proportion, and even to the diſparagement of Chriſtian obedience; partly from fancying them ſo generally received and remembered, that little needs to be ſaid, but on ſocial obligations; partly again from not having ſtudied theology deeply enough, to treat of them ably and beneficially: God grant it may never have been for want of inwardly experiencing their importance. But whatever be the cauſe, the effect hath been lamentable. Our people have grown leſs and leſs mindful, firſt of the diſtinguiſhing articles of their Creed, then, as will always be the caſe, of that one, which they hold in common with the Heathens; have forgot in effect their Creator, as well as their Redeemer and Sanctifier; ſeldom or never ſeriouſly worſhipping him, or thinking of the ſtate of their ſouls in relation to him; but flattering themſelves, that what they are pleaſed to call a moral and harmleſs life, though far from being either, is the *one thing needful*. Reflections have been made upon us, of different natures, and with different views, on account of theſe things, by Deiſts, by Papiſts, by Brethren of our own, which it is eaſy to ſhew have been much too ſevere.

But

(*e*) Heb. xiii. 17.
(*f*) Tit. ii. 2. 7.
(*g*) Eph. iv. 21.
(*h*) Eph. iii. 11.

But the only complete vindication of ourſelves will be to preach fully and frequently the doctrines, which we are unjuſtly accuſed of caſting off or undervaluing: yet ſo, as to reſerve always a due ſhare of our diſcourſes, which it is generally reported ſome of our cenſurers do not, for the common duties of common life, as did our Saviour and his Apoſtles. But then we muſt enforce them chiefly by motives peculiarly Chriſtian: I will not ſay, only by ſuch; for the Scripture adds others. And while we urge on our hearers the neceſſity of univerſal holineſs, we muſt urge equally that of their *being found in Chriſt; not having their own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but the righteouſneſs, which is of God by faith* (*i*).

Copious and intereſting as the ſubject is, I muſt now conclude. And *I beſeech you, Brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation* (*k*): for I have ſpoken to you from the ſimplicity of a plain heart, and the ſincerity of a deep concern for the intereſts of the church of Chriſt, and the everlaſting welfare of every one of you; not as condemning, not as diſeſteeming you, very far from it, but as being *jealous over you with godly jealouſy*, and deeply affected with the preſent ſtate of religion amongſt us. Wickedneſs, profaneneſs, avowed infidelity, have made a dreadful progreſs in this nation. The civil power, in moſt caſes, doth little to check that progreſs: and it is an unhappineſs in our moſt happy conſtitution, that it cannot eaſily, if at all, do what one might wiſh. Eccleſiaſtical authority is not only too much limited, but too much deſpiſed, as matters now ſtand amongſt us, to do almoſt any thing to purpoſe. In the ſmall degree, that it can be exerted uſefully, I hope it will, and promiſe my utmoſt endeavours, in all caſes notified to me, that it ſhall. But the main ſupport of piety and morals conſiſts in the parochial labours of the Clergy. If our country is to be preſerved from utter profligateneſs and ruin, it muſt be by our means: and, take notice, we cannot loſe our influence, but in a great meaſure by our own fault. If we look on what we are apt to call our livings only as our livelihoods, and think of little more than living on the income of them according to our own inclinations: if for want of *a good conſcience, or faith unfeigned* (*l*), we forfeit the protection of God; and by worldlineſs, or indolence, or levity in behaviour, talk or appearance, (for groſs vices I put out of the queſtion) loſe, as we aſſuredly ſhall, the reverence of mankind: there will be no foundation left for us to ſtand upon. Our legal eſtabliſhment will ſhake and ſink under us, if once it can be ſaid we do the public little ſervice, and much ſooner if we are ſuſpected of diſquieting it. Wicked people will attack us without reſerve: the good will be forced to condemn and give us up: and well would it be for us, if this were the worſt. *It is a ſmall thing to be judged of man's judgment: He, that judgeth us, is the Lord* (*m*). But while we teach the genuine truths of the Goſpel, and evidently feel the truths we teach; and are more anxious about the ſouls of men, than our own profit, or pleaſure, or power; while we ſubmit ourſelves dutifully and affectionately, (as we never had greater cauſe) to the *King* and thoſe *who are* put *in authority* under him: *lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godlineſs and honeſty* (*n*); and join with our piety and loyalty and virtue, but

(*i*) Phil. iii. 9.
(*k*) Heb. xiii. 22.
(*l*) 1 Tim. i. 5.
(*m*) 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.
(*n*) 1 Tim. ii. 2.

but a common ſhare of prudence: we ſhall, in ſpite of enemies, through his mercy, who hath promiſed to be *with us alway* (*o*), not fail of being upheld. The religious will *eſteem us very highly in love for our work's ſake* (*p*): the *wiſe in their generation* (*q*), though not religious, will perceive our importance: the vicious and deſtitute of principle will be awed by us: and the ſeed of the word, however trampled under foot by ſome, will ſpring up and bear fruit in the hearts of many. Let us think then ſeriouſly, what depends on us, what it requires of us, *and give ourſelves wholly to it* (*r*). God hath placed us in a ſtation of difficulty and labour, at preſent alſo of reproach and contempt from great numbers of men. But ſtill, if we only learn to value our function juſtly, and love it ſincerely, we ſhall be unſpeakably happier in diſcharging the duties of it, than we poſſibly can be in any thing elſe. The things, in which the world places happineſs, are very trifles. We may plainly ſee them to be ſuch now, if we will: and we ſhall ſee in a little time, whether we will or not, that the only real point of moment is, to have approved ourſelves *good and faithful ſervants* (*s*) to our great Maſter. Let us all therefore bear in mind continually, how matters will appear to us then: and heartily pray and earneſtly endeavour, *ſo to paſs through things temporal, that we finally loſe not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, our Lord* (*t*).

(*o*) Matth. xxviii. 20.
(*p*) 1 Theſſ. v. 13.
(*q*) Luke xvi. 8.
(*r*) 1 Tim. iv. 15.
(*s*) Matth. xxv. 21.
(*t*) Coll. 4th Sunday after Trinity.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DISTRIBUTED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

CANTERBURY,

In the YEAR 1762,

The ARCHBISHOP being hindered by Illneſs from viſiting them in Perſon.

Reverend Brethren,

IT having pleaſed God that I ſhould live to come amongſt you a ſecond time, I think it my duty to proceed with the ſame kind of exhortations, which I gave you at firſt. For though many ſubjects of inſtruction might be proper, there is a peculiar propriety in thoſe, which relate more immediately to your conduct: and though I might very juſtly give you, in general, praiſe inſtead of advice, yet they who deſerve the moſt of the former, will be moſt deſirous of the latter, knowing how much need of it the beſt of us have. And I hope the freedoms which I ſhall take with you in this reſpect, will the rather be pardoned, as I both permit and intreat you to uſe the ſame with me, when

occaſion requires it; being ſincerely diſpoſed, if I know myſelf, to ſet you an example of docility.

I began with your obligation to reſidence; and the appointment of curates, either to ſupply your abſence when you could not reſide, or to aſſiſt you when the work was too heavy for you. And then I entered a little into the common duties of incumbents and curates, in which I ſhall now make ſome further progreſs: more ſolicitous about the importance of directions, than the accuracy of method; and uſing no other apology, if I ſhould happen to repeat what I have given you in charge already, than that of the Apoſtle: *To* ſay *the ſame things, to me is not grievous, and for you it is ſafe* (*a*).

The ſame Apoſtle's admonition to *Timothy* is, *Take heed unto thyſelf, and to thy doctrine* (*b*). The main point is what he begins with, the care of our temper and behaviour. For without that, our preaching will ſeldom be ſuch as it ought, and ſcarce ever bring forth its proper fruits. Now a Chriſtian temper conſiſts of various parts: but the firſt impreſſion, which a genuine faith in the Goſpel makes on the ſoul, and the ruling principle, which it fixes there is a deep ſenſe of love to God and our fellow-creatures, producing an earneſt deſire, that we and they may be for ever happy in his preſence. Whoever therefore is deſtitute of this feeling, ought not, though free from groſs vices, to become a Clergyman: and without obtaining it from the Giver of all good things by fervent prayer, no man is qualified to fill the place of one. For notwithſtanding that he may preſerve ſome *form of godlineſs*, without which he would be miſchievous and ſhocking in the higheſt degree: yet not having the reality and *power thereof* (*c*), he muſt profeſs, and ſeemingly attempt, to make others what he is far from being himſelf. Conſequently his endeavours out of the pulpit will be infrequent, reluctant, faint: and in it they will at beſt be unnatural and ungraceful, whatever pains he may take in his compoſitions, or whatever vehemence he may affect in his delivery. Hence he will be diſſatisfied within, detected and diſeſteemed by the judicious part of his hearers, and of little uſe to the reſt, if he is not even hurtful by miſleading them. Or whatever his caſe may be amongſt men, his inward want of the piety, which he outwardly pretends to, muſt render him uncommonly guilty in the ſight of God. Heaven forbid, that I ſhould have need to enlarge on ſuch a character in this audience.

But have we not moſt of us cauſe to apprehend, that our religious principles, though ſincere, are not ſufficiently exerted; and therefore produce not the fruit, which they might? Do we not rather take it for granted, that we approve ourſelves to be duly in earneſt, than find on impartial examination, that we do? No man ſhould raſhly ſay or ſurmiſe this of another: but every one ſhould ſearch home into it for himſelf. And we ſhould attentively read the Scriptures, and the treatiſes written by wiſe and good men concerning the duties of God's miniſters: to ſee if we are ſuch as they deſcribe, and ſtir up ourſelves to become ſuch as we ought.

Good inclinations, thus excited, will not fail, through the aſſiſtance of

(*a*) Phil. iii. 1. (*b*) 1 Tim. iv. 16. (*c*) 2 Tim. iii. 5.

of Divine grace, of directing us into a ſuitable conduct. And were a man, who confeſſedly means well, to overdo a little ſometimes, the rightneſs of his intention would plead his excuſe very ſtrongly. However we ſhould carefully avoid extremes, even on the better ſide: not give uncommanded demonſtrations of our Chriſtian zeal, when they will probably ſerve no good purpoſe, and be deemed oſtentation, or turned into ridicule, or provoke ill humour; but reſtrain, according as times and places and company may require, the ſentiments which elſe we could be glad to utter. Only we muſt do this in ſuch a manner, as not to tempt the moſt rigid profeſſor of religion to imagine, or the moſt profligate enemy of it to ſuggeſt, that we have little or none: but ſhew our concern for it on every fit occaſion, with full as much diligence, as we decline unfit ones. And here, I conceive, it is, that we of the Clergy are chiefly apt to fail. We do not always appear in the common intercourſes of life, ſufficiently penetrated with the importance of our function, or ſufficiently aſſiduous to promote the ends of our miſſion.

Too poſſibly a great part of our people may like the lukewarm amongſt us the better for reſembling themſelves, and giving them no uneaſineſs on compariſon, but ſeeming to authorize their indifference. But then, ſuch of us can do them no good. Our example can teach them nothing beyond a little decent regularity, in which they will fancy they need not quite come up to us neither. Our ſermons, and reading of prayers, they will conſider only as matters of form: and finding in us hardly any thing at other times of what we expreſs at theſe, they will preſume, that our inward regard to it is not very great, and that they are not bound to have more. Therefore if they are pleaſed with us, if they eſteem us, while we continue to be of this turn, it muſt be for ſomething foreign from our office, ſomething of a middle, or it may be a blameable nature, not as teachers of the Goſpel: a character which they take us to lay aſide as much as we well can. And ſo the better they think of us, the more lightly they will think of our miniſtry; till at length they join with thoſe avowed Infidels, who boldly affirm, though often againſt their own conſciences, that we believe not what we preach, elſe it would have more influence upon us.

Then, at the ſame time, the right diſpoſitions of well inclined perſons will languiſh and decay, for want of that countenance and aſſiſtance in ſerious piety, which they ſhould receive from their paſtors. For if the tokens of our piety be confined to the church, they will be of little ſervice either out of it, or in it. Or if ſome good people ſuffer no harm themſelves from our defects, they will ſee with great ſorrow, that others do: all of them will be much readier to think the clerical order in general careleſs and light, if thoſe are ſo, of whom they ſee moſt: their ears will be open to the invectives, which artful or heated men are daily pouring forth againſt us: they will eaſily be led to undervalue and miſconſtrue the beſt inſtructions of thoſe, with whom they are diſguſted; and run after any teachers, who have the powerful recommendation, for it will always, and no wonder, be a very powerful one, of ſeeming more in earneſt. The irregularities and diviſions which have prevailed ſo lamentably in our church of late, are greatly owing to an opinion, that we are uſually indifferent about vital inward religion. It is true, the

ſpreaders of this imputation, which hath been monſtrouſly exaggerated, will have much to anſwer for: but ſo ſhall we alſo, unleſs we take the only way to ſilence it, by cutting off hereafter all occaſion for it.

Now the firſt neceſſary ſtep to ſeem good is to be ſo; for mere pretence will be ſeen through: and the next is, to *let your light ſhine before men* (*d*), in the faithful and laborious exerciſe of your function. Living amongſt your pariſhioners, or as near them as may be: inquiring frequently and perſonally concerning the welfare and behaviour of thoſe, with whom you cannot be ſtatedly preſent; reverent and judicious reading of the prayers and leſſons in your churches, inſtructive and affecting ſermons delivered with diſcreet warmth, readineſs to take extraordinary pains for the occaſional aſſiſtance of your brethren, diligence in forming the youth to a ſenſe of their Chriſtian duty, in bringing your people to the holy communion, and where it can be, to week-day prayers: all theſe things will tend very much both to your uſefulneſs and your credit. Relieving or obtaining relief for ſuch as are diſtreſſed in their circumſtances: hearing your people willingly and patiently, though perhaps low in rank or weak in underſtanding, when they would conſult you upon any difficulty, and anſwering them with conſideration and tenderneſs: diſpoſing them to be viſited when ſick, praying by them with fervency, exhorting and comforting them with fidelity, compaſſion and prudence; and reminding them ſtrongly, yet mildly, after their recovery, of their good thoughts and purpoſes during their illneſs; will be further proofs, very beneficial and very engaging ones, of your ſerioufneſs: which however you muſt complete by going through every other office of religion with dignity. I will ſpecify two.

One is that of baptiſm: which, eſpecially when adminiſtered in private houſes without neceſſity, is too often treated, even during the adminiſtration, rather as an idle ceremony than a Chriſtian ſacrament: or however that be, is commonly cloſe followed by very unſuitable, if not otherwiſe alſo indecent levity and jollity. Now in theſe circumſtances it is highly requiſite, that the miniſter ſhould by a due mixture of gravity and judgment ſupport the ſolemnity of the ordinance; and either prevent improprieties in the ſequel, or if it be doubtful whether he can, excuſe himſelf, with a civil intimation of the unfitneſs of them, from being preſent. The other inſtance is, that of ſaying grace over our daily food: which many, if not moſt, of the laity have, with a profaneneſs more than Heatheniſh, laid aſide: and I am ſorry to add, that ſome of the clergy hurry it over ſo irreverently, in a mutter or a whiſper, ſcarce, if at all, intelligible, that one might queſtion whether they had not better lay it aſide too, which yet God forbid, than make it thus inſignificant; and expoſe to contempt an act of devotion, and themſelves along with it, as doing what they are aſhamed of.

Indeed far from authorizing any ſlights of this ſort by our example, and as it were our conſent, we muſt through our whole converſation ſteadily and reſolutely, though with mildneſs and modeſty, always keep up the honour of religion and our order, which is inſeparable from our own: never ſpeak a word, or uſe a geſture, which can with the leaſt colour be interpreted, as if we had ſmall regard to our profeſſion, or exerciſed

(*d*) Matt. v. 16.

exciſed it chiefly for a maintenance: never repeat, never hear, diſcourſes of an irreligious or immoral turn, without expreſſing a plain diſapprobation, briefly or at large, as the caſe may require: yet be on all occaſions courteous, and on proper occaſions cheerful; but let it be evidently the cheerfulneſs of ſerious men. *Fooliſh talking and jeſting are not convenient* (*e*), not becoming any perſon: but thoſe leaſt of all, who ſhould know beſt, that *every idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof*, according to its tendency, *in the day of judgment* (*f*). Unſeaſonable or exceſſive mirth fits peculiarly ill upon him whoſe office muſt or ought to bring before his mind ſo frequently, the afflictions of this mortal ſtate, the holineſs of God's law, his own grievous imperfections, the deplorable ſins of many others, and the final ſentence, that awaits us all. Doubtleſs we ſhould endeavour to make religion agreeable; but not to make ourſelves agreeable, by leading our company to forget religion. We ſhould *every one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good* (*g*): but not ſo *pleaſe men*, as to fail in the character of *ſervants of Chriſt* (*h*). We ſhould be *made*, in a fitting ſenſe and meaſure, *all things to all men, that we may by all means ſave ſome* (*i*): but we ſhall loſe ourſelves, not ſave others, if we are quite different perſons in the pulpit and out of it: nor can we act a more incongruous part, than to chuſe raiſing and promoting the laugh for our province in converſation, inſtead of duly reſtraining our own livelineſs and that of others. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh* (*k*): and our hearts ought to abound with better things. I own, both affected and exceſſive reſtraint, will do harm. But if we are ſincerely pious, and endeavour to be prudent, we ſhall combine uſeful informations and reflections with harmleſs entertainment: our *ſpeech will be with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, that we may know how we ought to anſwer every man* (*l*): we ſhall prove that we have the end of our miniſtry conſtantly in view, by drawing profitable leſſons, frequently, but naturally, out of topics of indifference; and bringing back the diſcourſe, if it goes aſtray, from exceptionable or unſafe ſubjects, to innocent ones; yet if poſſible without offenſive reproof, and perhaps imperceptibly. *For the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive*, that is, roughly and harſhly, *but be gentle unto all men* (*m*), even the worſt. Yet on the other hand ſervile obſequiouſneſs, or *flattering words* (*n*), even to the beſt, are far remote from *having our converſation in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity* (*o*).

Talking with great earneſtneſs about worldly affairs, or with great delight about diverſions and trifles, betrays a mind overmuch ſet upon them: and numbers will repreſent the caſe, as worſe than it is. Nay, our being only in a very peculiar degree good judges of ſuch matters, or of any that are unconnected with our office, will, unleſs we have ſome eſpecial call to them, be commonly thought to imply, that we have ſtudied and love them beyond what we ought, to the neglect of our proper buſineſs.

(*e*) Eph. v. 4.
(*f*) Matt. xii. 36.
(*g*) Rom. xv. 2.
(*h*) Gal. i. 10.
(*i*) 1 Cor. ix. 22.
(*k*) Matt. xii. 34.
(*l*) Col. iv. 6.
(*m*) 2 Tim. ii. 24.
(*n*) 1 Theſſ. ii. 5.
(*o*) 2 Cor. i. 12.

buſineſs. For we are not to expect very favourable conſtructions from mankind: yet it greatly imports us to have their good opinion; which we ſhall not ſecure, unleſs in whatever other lights they may ſee us occaſionally, the worthy clergyman be the predominant part of our character. If practical Chriſtian piety and benevolence and ſelf-government, with conſtant zeal to promote them all upon earth, are not the firſt and chief qualities, which your pariſhioners and acquaintance will aſcribe to you: if they will ſpeak of you, as noted on other accounts, but paſs over theſe articles; and when aſked about them, be at a loſs what to ſay, excepting poſſibly that they know no harm of you, all is not right: nor can ſuch a clergy anſwer the deſign of its inſtitution any where; or even maintain its ground in a country of freedom and learning, though a yet worſe may in the midſt of ſlavery and ignorance.

Actually ſharing in the gaieties and amuſements of the world will provoke cenſure ſtill more, than making them favourite ſubjects of diſcourſe. I do not ſay, that recreations, lawful in themſelves, are unlawful to us: or that thoſe which have been formerly prohibited by eccleſiaſtical rules, merely as diſreputable, may not ceaſe to be ſo by change of cuſtom. But ſtill *not all things lawful are expedient* (*p*), and certainly theſe things, further than they are in truth requiſite for health of body, refreſhment of mind, or ſome really valuable purpoſe, are all a miſemployment of our leiſure hours, which we ought to ſet our people a pattern of filling up well. A miniſter of God's word, attentive to his duty, will neither have leiſure for ſuch diſſipations, public or domeſtic, nor liking to them. He will ſee, that pleaſure, or rather a wretched affectation of it, is become the idol of mankind; to which they are ſacrificing their fortunes, their families, their healths, their reputations, their regard to God, to their ſocial duties, to the ſtate of their ſouls, to their future being. Now what are the clergy to do in this caſe? If we but ſeem to go along with them, who ſhall call them back? For as to the pretence of keeping them within bounds by our preſence, it is viſibly a mere pretence. Or were it not, the elder and graver of us would ſurely think ſuch a ſuperintendency no very honourable one: and few of the younger and livelier could be ſafely truſted with it. Indeed we none of us know, into what improprieties of behaviour, at leaſt what wrongneſs of diſpoſition we may be drawn by the *evil communications* of theſe aſſemblies: whether, if happily they ſhould not otherwiſe *corrupt* our *good manners* (*q*), we may not however grow inwardly fond of them; come to think our profeſſion a dull one, and the calls of it troubleſome; throw off as much of the burthen as we can, and perform with reluctance and cold formality the remainder, which we muſt.

At leaſt it will be ſuſpected, that we cannot greatly diſapprove the cuſtoms in which we voluntarily join, the perſons with whom we familiarly aſſociate, or indeed any thing ſaid or done where we delight to be: that if we do not go the utmoſt lengths, yet we ſhould, if for ſhame we durſt; for theſe things are our choice, not the duties of our miniſtry; which therefore declaimers will ſay we are not ſincere in, or however unfit for. And even they, who plead our example as a precedent for themſelves, will uſually honour us much the leſs for ſetting it.

Still

(*p*) 1 Cor. vi. 12. (*q*) 1 Cor. xv. 33.

Still I do not mean, that we ſhould be ſour and moroſe: condemn innocent relaxations, and provoke men to ſay, that we rail out of envy at what we have abſurdly tied up ourſelves from partaking of: but expreſs our diſlike of them as mildly as the caſe will bear; ſlight with good humour the indulgences, in which others falſely place their happineſs; and convince them by our experience as well as reaſoning, how very comfortably they may live without them. It is true, paying court to the gay and inconſiderate by imitation of them, may often be the ſhorter, and ſometimes the ſurer way to their favour. But the favour of the faſhionable world is not our aim: if it be, we have choſen our profeſſion very unwiſely. And though we ſhould ſucceed thus with ſuch perſons in point of intereſt, we muſt not hope even for their eſteem. For they will both think and ſpeak with the loweſt contempt of the complying wretch, whom yet for their own convenience or humour they will careſs, and now and then prefer.

Our predeceſſors, that their abſtaining from indiſcreet levities might be notorious, wore conſtantly the peculiar habit of their order. And certainly we ſhould be more reſpected, if we followed their example in this more univerſally. They complained of no inconveniencies from it: nor did I ever, in a courſe of many years, find any worth naming. In the primitive and perſecuting times indeed Clergymen wore no peculiar dreſs: and long after were diſtinguiſhed only by retaining a greater ſimplicity of garb than others. But gradually ſuperiors diſcerned reaſons for enjoining a different ſort: and ſurely others may well pay them ſo far the obedience promiſed to them, as always to ſhew by ſome evident and proper marks, (for nothing more is expected) of what claſs of men they are. If you do not, it will be ſaid, either that you are aſhamed of your cauſe, or conſcious of your unſkilfulneſs to defend it, or that you conceal yourſelves to take occaſionally unfit liberties. Indeed ſome external reſtraints of this kind, merely as an admonition againſt unſeemly diſcourſe and conduct and company, would, though not preſcribed, be very adviſeable for young Clergymen: amongſt whom they, who diſlike them the moſt, might ſometimes perceive, that they have the moſt need of them. And we that are older, ſhould keep up the cuſtom for their ſakes, though unneceſſary for our own. Beſides, we may all prevent, by ſuch notification of ourſelves, a great deal of unbecoming talk and deportment in others: and ſo eſcape both the diſagreeableneſs of reproving it, and the impropriety of not reproving it. Or if after all it cannot be prevented, they who are offended with it, will immediately ſee in us a refuge from it.

But then a habit, viſibly a Clergyman's, muſt be ſuch in every part as befits a Clergyman: have no look of effeminacy or love of finery in it (*r*). For we had better put on the lay dreſs entirely, than diſgrace the clerical one. And it is doubly contemptible, firſt to ſhew what a fondneſs we have for things utterly beneath us, and then how poorly we are able to indulge it. Therefore let us be uniform: and as our character is a truly venerable one, let us think we do ourſelves honour by wearing the ancient badges of it. I need not add, that our whole demeanor ſhould be anſwerable to our cloathing: that neatneſs and delicacy of manner, ſkill in the ſcience of eating (*s*), and the perfection of liquors, in ſhort

(*r*) *Hieron. ad Nepotian.* §. 9. (*s*) Ibid. §. 6.

ſhort every approach to luxurious gratification, is ſtrangely out of place in one, who hath devoted himſelf to *endure hardneſs as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt* (*t*).

Still we ought to judge very charitably of thoſe, who take greater liberties, than we dare: never blame them more, ſeldom ſo much as they deſerve; and confine our ſeverity to our own practice. Only we muſt watch with moderate ſtrictneſs over our families alſo: not only keeping up the joint and ſeparate worſhip of God in them, which I hope no Clergyman omits, but forming them to every part of piety and virtue and prudence. St. *Paul* requires, that not only *deacons*, but their *wives* be *grave* (*u*): and that the higher Clergy be ſuch, as *rule well their own houſes, having their children in ſubjection with all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God* (*w*)? Whence we have all promiſed at our ordination, to *frame and faſhion our families*, together with ourſelves, *according to the doctrine of Chriſt, and to make them, as much as in us lieth, wholeſome examples and patterns to his flock*. They are naturally the firſt objects of our care: we have peculiar opportunities of inſtructing and reſtraining them. If we neglect them, we ſhall never be thought to have much concern for others: if we are unſucceſsful with them, we ſhall be deemed very unſkilful; and bid to look at home before we reprove the reſt of our flock. But exhibiting inſtances of goodneſs and happineſs, produced under our own roofs by the methods, to which we direct thoſe around us, muſt needs add ſingular weight to our exhortations.

For the importance of the rules hitherto laid down, we have the judgment of a moſt able and ſubtle and determined enemy, the emperor *Julian*; who deſigning to re-eſtabliſh paganiſm, and accounting, as he declares, the ſtrictneſs and ſanctity, profeſſed by Chriſtians, to be a principal cauſe of the prevalence of their faith, in two of his epiſtles gives directions, undoubtedly copied from the injunctions obſerved by the Clergy of thoſe days, that the heathen prieſts be men of ſerious tempers and deportment; that they neither utter, nor hear, nor read, nor think of any thing licentious or indecent; that they baniſh far from them all offenſive jeſts and libertine converſation: be neither expenſive nor ſhewiſh in their apparel; go to no entertainments but ſuch as are made by the worthieſt perſons; frequent no taverns; appear but ſeldom in places of concourſe; never be ſeen at the public games and ſpectacles; and take care, that their wives and children and ſervants be pious, as well as themſelves (*x*). Let not, I entreat you, this apoſtate put us to ſhame.

But Clergymen, who are ſerious in their whole behaviour, and the care of their families alſo, are often too unactive amongſt their people; apt to think, that if they perform regularly the ordinary offices of the church, exhort from the pulpit ſuch as will come to hear them, and anſwer the common occaſional calls of parochial duty, they have done as much as they need or well can, and ſo turn themſelves to other matters: perhaps never viſit ſome of their pariſhioners; and with the reſt enter only into the ſame ſort of talk, that any one elſe would do. Now St. *Paul* ſaith, he *taught* the Epheſians both *publickly and from houſe to houſe, teſtifying*

(*t*) 2 Tim. ii. 3. (*u*) 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11. (*w*) 1 Tim. v. 4, 5.
(*x*) Ep. 49. ad *Arſac.* p. 430, 431. Fragm. Ep. p. 301—305.

teſtifying repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt (*y*); and *ceaſed not to warn every one day and night* (*z*). He alſo commands *Timothy* to *preach the word*, and *be inſtant, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon* (*a*); at ſtated times and others: not forcing advice upon perſons, when it was likelier to do harm than good: but prudently improving leſs favourable opportunities, if no others offered. Thus unqueſtionably ſhould we do. And a chief reaſon, why we have ſo little hold upon our people is, that we converſe with them ſo little, as watchmen over their ſouls. The paſtors of the foreign proteſtants outdo us greatly in this reſpect, and are honoured in proportion. The Romiſh prieſts have their laity under their hands, on one account or another, almoſt continually, and acquire by it an abſolute dominion over them. Both the old diſſenters from our church, and thoſe who are now forming new ſeparations, gain and preſerve a ſurpriſing influence amongſt their followers by perſonal religious intercourſe. Why ſhould not we learn from them? At firſt ſuch applications may by diſuſe appear ſtrange; and both have their difficulties and their dangers. But the moſt apprehenſive of them will be the ſafeſt from them: and all will improve their talents by practice. On young perſons you will be able to make good impreſſions by diſcourſe with them before confirmation: theſe may be renewed in private exhortations afterwards to receive the ſacrament: and the ſpiritual acquaintance thus begun, may be continued ever after. Other means may be found with grown perſons: on the firſt ſettling of a family in your pariſh; on occaſion of any great ſickneſs, or affliction, or mercy; on many others, if you ſeek for them, and engage worthy friends to aſſiſt you. Even common converſation may be led very naturally to points of piety and morals; and numbers be thus induced to reading proper books, to public, to private, to family devotion, to ſobriety, juſtice, alms-giving and Chriſtian love. When once you are well got into the method, you will proceed with eaſe and applauſe; provided your whole character and conduct be conſiſtent, elſe you will fall into total diſgrace; and particularly provided you convince your pariſhioners, that you *ſeek, not their's, but them* (*b*).

A due meaſure of diſintereſtedneſs is one main requiſite for the ſucceſs of a Clergyman's labours. You will therefore avoid all mean attentions to ſmall matters: never be rigorous in your demands of them; never engage in any diſputes about them, unleſs a part of your income, too large to be given up, depends upon them. In all diſputes you will prefer diſcreet references to proceedings at law: and when the latter become neceſſary, carry them on in the faireſt, the leaſt expenſive, the friendlieſt manner. You will be very tender in your demands upon the poor, and very equitable towards the rich; though you will conſcientiouſly preſerve all the material rights, with which you are intruſted, for your ſucceſſors. If you find room and reaſon to improve your income, you will do it within bounds: and prove, that no wrong motive induces you to it, by living with decent frugality, providing for your families with moderation, and going as far as ever you are able in acts of good-natured, and eſpecially of pious, liberality; which are the moſt valuable in themſelves, the moſt incumbent on you, and the moſt overlooked by others. For nothing

(*y*) Acts xx. 20, 21. (*z*) ver. 31. (*a*) 2 Tim. iv. 2.
(*b*) 2 Cor. xii. 14.

nothing gives greater or juster offence, than to see a Clergyman intent upon hoarding, or luxurious, or splendid, instead of being charitable.

Few indeed of our order have much to spare: and many have cause to wish for a more plentiful subsistence. Yet even these, and much more the better preferred, if they are earnest seekers and importunate solicitors for promotion, lower their characters grievously: and such as use indirect means to obtain it, are often providentially disappointed; or though they succeed, always dishonour themselves, and never do much good to others: whereas the lowest of their brethren will be justly respected, and may be highly useful, if he submits contentedly to God's good providence, and labours to live within the compass of his income: exceeding which, without visible necessity, will bring some imputation even upon him, and deservedly a much heavier on such as enjoy an ampler provision.

However inoffensive we are, we must expect to receive, from time to time, injurious and provoking treatment, as the Scripture hath forewarned us. We shall hurt both our own cause and that of religion dreadfully, if we return it: and do honour to both, if we behave under it calmly, *with* such *meekness of wisdom* (*c*), as may tend to bring our adversaries over, if not to our sentiments concerning the matter in question, whatever it be, yet to a good opinion of our meaning and temper; or may at least, if we fail of success with them, engage more impartial persons to countenance and protect us. Indeed we ought, if possible, to keep not only ourselves, but others, out of all angry contests. We solemnly promised at our ordination, to *maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in us, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to our charge:* and by so doing we are bound never to raise or foment personal, family, parochial, political or ecclesiastical animosities, but do all in our power to compose and extinguish them: nor will any thing conduce more to our credit or to our usefulness. The political party-spirit is, God be thanked, of late years much abated. Let us guard against the return of it: shew, in word and deed, becoming respect, as we have great cause, to our excellent King, and all who are put in authority under him: *nor exercise ourselves in matters too high for us* (*d*), but *be quiet and do our own business* (*e*); *let our moderation*, even where we are concerned to meddle, *be known unto all men* (*f*), exercising it even to those who have least of it; and always remember, that neither patriot love to our earthly country, nor loyal attachment to our earthly sovereign, will be accepted by our heavenly Father, without uniform obedience to the whole of his Gospel.

Another point of great importance to Clergymen is, that they be studious. This will keep your money from being spent unwisely; and likewise your time from being thrown away hurtfully or unprofitably, or hanging heavy on your hands. It will procure you reverence too, as persons of knowledge: whereas the idle will, even by the ignorant, be thought deficient. And, which is the main thing, this alone will enable you to understand the business of your station, and perform it well. But then you must apply to such things chiefly, as will fit you most to answer the

(*c*) James iii. 13. (*d*) Psal. cxxxi. 2. (*e*) 1 Thess. iv. 11.
(*f*) Phil. iv. 5.

the great end of your employment; and *determine* with St. *Paul to know nothing*, comparatively ſpeaking, *among ſt* your people, *ſave Chriſt Jeſus and him crucified* (*g*). The concern of a pariſh miniſter is, to make the loweſt of his congregation apprehend the doctrine of ſalvation by repentance, faith and obedience; and to labour, that when they know the way of life, they may walk in it. If he doth not theſe things for them, he doth nothing: and it requires much conſideration to find out the proper methods of doing them, and much pains and patience to try one after another. Smooth diſcourſes, compoſed partly in fine words which they do not underſtand, partly in flowing ſentences which they cannot follow to the end; containing little that awakens their drowſy attention, little that inforces on them plainly and home what they muſt do to be ſaved; leave them as ignorant and uninformed as ever, and only lull them into a fatal ſecurity. Therefore bring yourſelves down to their level; for what ſuits the meaneſt Chriſtian will ſuit the higheſt: examine if they take in what you ſay, and change the form of it till they do. This I recommend for your firſt ſtudy: and be aſſured you will improve yourſelves by it no leſs than your hearers. But ſo far as you have opportunity conſiſtently with this, apply to any part of Science, to every part you can, that is connected with your profeſſion: only learn, by weighing carefully the judgments and reaſonings of others, to think modeſtly of yourſelves; avoid, in the outſet of your inquiries more eſpecially, drawing haſty concluſions: be at leaſt as much on your guard againſt fondneſs of new opinions, as prepoſſeſſion for eſtabliſhed doctrines: and beware of being miſled, either by the poſitiveneſs of vehement writers, or the falſe colours of artful ones.

You will doubtleſs cultivate peculiarly thoſe branches of knowledge, which the circumſtances of the times, or of your pariſhes, peculiarly point out to you. God hath permitted us, for our ſins, to be attacked in a remarkable degree, by infidels on one hand, and by maintainers of innumerable ſtrange notions on the other. And we have need, that every one, who is able to qualify himſelf well, ſhould aſſiſt in defending his part of the common cauſe. For there are too many unanſwered books abroad in the world, and more appearing daily, written againſt chriſtianity and morals and the doctrines of our church. Nor have we of the Clergy, for ſome time paſt, born ſo large a ſhare, comparatively with perſons of other communions, in vindicating what we teach, as might be expected from us. I hope you are not often obliged, in this Dioceſe, to encounter unbelievers from the pulpit: and you will certainly not chuſe to alarm your people, by refuting, in form, objections to which they are ſtrangers; though it may be uſeful to obviate them briefly, and if poſſible without naming them. But as, probably enough, ſome of you will at one time or another in company meet with ſuch perſons, or hear of their talk, I would give you a few directions in relation to them.

If any of them are virtuous in their conduct, and backward to offend in diſcourſe, they ſhould not be unſeaſonably provoked, but treated with reſpect. If any of them build their unbelief on ſerious argument, which plainly very few do, they ſhould be directed to the books or the learned men, that are beſt fitted to anſwer them: and the leſs able ſhould prepare

(*g*) 1 Cor. ii. 2.

prepare for combat with them, but not engage too far in it prematurely. If they cannot at preſent be convinced of the falſehood of their tenets, they ſhould be ſhewn however, in a gentle manner, the pernicious effects of promulging them. But if they will obſtinately perſiſt to ſacrifice every thing valuable amongſt men to their own vices, or their own vanity, we muſt openly withſtand them, and warn others againſt them. Yet even this ought to be done without paſſion or bitterneſs, otherwiſe all the blame will be laid on us: eſpecially without perſonal incivilities, even to the worſt of them, elſe they will become ſtill worſe than they were. But then we muſt never aſſiſt the very beſt of them in gaining influence and growing dangerous; nor bring our own ſincerity into queſtion by intimacies with them, which they will uſually repreſent, and ſometimes believe to proceed from our inwardly thinking as they do. Much leſs ſhould we ever condeſcend to the ſhocking meanneſs of paying court for private ends, either to them, or to wicked wretches of any kind, though not infidels; but connect ourſelves with worthy perſons; engage their ſupport, and excite their endeavours to repreſs profaneneſs and immorality.

It is peculiarly unhappy, that while we are employed on one ſide in defending the Goſpel, we are accuſed on another of corrupting it. I have not now in my view either the Church of *Rome*, or the Proteſtants who broke off from us a century ago. The methods of dealing with both have been long ſince preſcribed, and I repeat them not: but intreat your attention to the movements of each, eſpecially the former, if you have any of them in your pariſhes. But I mean to ſpeak of perſons riſen up in our own times, and profeſſing the ſtricteſt piety: who vehemently charge us with departing from the doctrines and ſlighting the precepts of our Religion: but have indeed themſelves advanced unjuſtifiable notions, as neceſſary truths; giving good people groundleſs fears, and bad ones groundleſs hopes; diſturbed the underſtandings of ſome, impaired the circumſtances of others; prejudiced multitudes againſt their proper miniſters, and prevented their edification by them; produced firſt diſorders in our churches, then partial or total ſeparations from them; and ſet up unauthorized teachers in their aſſemblies. Where theſe irregularities will end, God only knows: but it behoves us to be very careful, that they make no progreſs through our fault.

Now it would not only be injurious, but profane, to brand, with an opprobrious name, Chriſtians remarkably ſerious, merely for being ſuch: and equally imprudent to diſclaim them as not belonging to us, to let a ſect gain the credit of them, and labour to drive them into it. Surely we ſhould take, even were they wavering, or actually gone from us, the moſt reſpectful and perſuaſive means of recalling ſuch, and affixing them with us. Nay, ſuppoſing any perſons irrecoverably gone, we ſhould not be haſty to condemn, even in our thoughts, either them or their party, as enthuſiaſts or hypocrites: *whatſoever they are, it maketh no matter to us* (*b*). And much leſs ought we to ſay of either worſe than we are ſure they deſerve. When we are undoubtedly well informed of any extravagant things, which they have aſſerted or done, it may be uſeful to ſpeak ſtrongly of them: but not with anger and exaggeration; which will

(*b*) Gal. ii. 6.

will only give them a handle to cenſure our uncharitableneſs, and confute us: but with deep concern, that when ſo few perſons expreſs any zeal for the Goſpel, ſo many of thoſe, who do, run into extremes, that hurt its intereſts. Nor will ridicule become our character, or ſerve our cauſe better than invective. It may pleaſe thoſe very highly, who are in no danger of being proſelyted by them. But what ſhall we get by that? Perſons negligent of religion will at the ſame time be confirmed in their negligence: and think, that all they need to avoid is being *righteous overmuch* (*i*). Tender minds will be grieved and wounded by ſuch ill-placed levity: and crafty declaimers will rail at us with ſucceſs, as *ſcoffers* (*k*), *denying the power of godlineſs* (*l*). But if we let fall any light expreſſions, that can be wreſted into a ſeeming diſreſpect to any ſcripture doctrine or phraſe, we ſhall give our adverſaries unſpeakable advantages: and they have ſhewn, that they will uſe them without mercy or equity. Therefore we muſt guard every word, that we utter, againſt miſrepreſentations: be ſure to expreſs, in public and private, our firm belief of whatever evangelical truths border upon their miſtakes: and certainly be as vigilant over our behaviour, as our teaching: encourage no violence, no rudeneſs towards them; but recommend ourſelves to them by our mildneſs, our ſerioufneſs, our diligence: honour thoſe, who are truly devout and virtuous amongſt them, much more on that account, than we blame them for being injudicious, and hard to pleaſe; and be full as ready to acknowledge the good they have done, as to complain of the harm: yet beware, and counſel others to beware, of being drawn, by eſteem of their piety, into relithing their ſingularities, and patronizing their ſchiſm.

Acting thus, we ſhall not only *cut off occaſion from thoſe who deſire occaſion* (*m*) to ſpeak evil of us, and be able to remonſtrate with authority and effect againſt their exceſſes and wildneſſes; but, which is the chief point, we ſhall become better miniſters of Chriſt for their harſh treatment of us. And we ſhould always labour, that every thing may have this influence upon us: think with ourſelves, if others go too far, whether we do not fall ſhort; aſk our conſciences, whether we really do all that is in our power to reform and improve our people; whether the ſmall ſucceſs of our endeavours be, in truth, as it ought, a heavy grief to us; whether we have carefully ſearched out, and try inceſſantly to overcome the difficulties that lie in our way to making them better. Theſe things, if we are in earneſt, we ſhall chiefly have at heart: and if we are not in earneſt, *we are of all men* the moſt guilty, and *the moſt miſerable* (*n*).

In giving you my advice thus largely and freely on theſe ſeveral heads, I no more ſuppoſe you culpable in relation to any of them, than you do your pariſhioners, when you exhort them to any particular duties, or warn them againſt particular ſins. On the contrary, to uſe the apoſtle's words, *I am perſuaded of you, brethren, that ye are full of goodneſs, repleniſhed with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another. Nevertheleſs*, if I may preſume to adopt, with due abatements, the ſubſequent words alſo, *I have* ſpoken *ſomewhat boldly unto you in part, as putting you in mind*,

(*i*) Eccl. vii. 16. (*k*) 2 Pet. iii. 3. (*l*) 2 Tim. ii. 15.
(*m*) 2 Cor. xi. 12. (*n*) 1 Cor. xv. 19.

mind, becauſe of the grace which is given me of God, that I ſhould be the miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to you (*o*), as you are to your reſpective congregations. And let us all pray for ourſelves and each other daily, that we may ſo *feed the flock of God which is among us, and be enſamples to it, that when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, we may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away* (*p*).

(*o*) Rom. xv. 14, 15, 16. (*p*) 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, 4.

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY of the DIOCESE

OF

CANTERBURY,

In the YEAR 1766.

Reverend Brethren,

HAVING diſtributed amongſt you, above three years ago, when ſickneſs prevented me from viſiting you in perſon, a print-l diſcourſe, in which I exhorted you, as St. *Paul* did *Timothy*, to *ke heed unto yourſelves*; I proceed now to add, as he did, *and to your ſtrine* (*a*).

To inſtruct perſons in religion is the leading part of a Clergyman's ity. And though he will do it in a very uſeful degree by the example a Chriſtian behaviour on all occaſions; yet he will do it more eſpe-ally in the peculiar diſcharge of his office. When he is only to uſe e forms preſcribed him, he may, by uſing them with due reverence and opriety, greatly promote both knowledge and pious diſpoſitions in his hearers.

(*a*) 1 Tim. iv. 16.

hearers. Therefore we ought to watch diligently over ourselves in this respect: and then it will be easier to convince our people, that they may and should learn a great deal from the exhortations, the prayers, the praises, the portions of scripture, of which our liturgy consists; that therefore, even when there is no other service, they should come to church for the sake of these far more constantly, and attend to them far more carefully than the generality of them do; indeed should have them in much higher esteem, than the mere products of our private thoughts.

But I shall confine myself to the instructions which you give of your own; speaking of them chiefly with a view of suggesting such advice to the younger part of you, as I hope the elder will approve, and enforce.

And here I must begin with repeating, what I need not enlarge upon, for I have done it already, that the foundation of every thing in our profession is true piety within our breasts, prompting us to excite it in others. Even heathens made it a rule, that an orator, if he would persuade, must be a good man: much more must a preacher. When a bad one utters divine truths, we shut our ears, we feel indignation. Form yourselves therefore thoroughly, by devout meditations and fervent prayer, to seriousness of heart, and zeal for the eternal welfare of souls: for then every thing else, that you are to do, will follow of course.

You will earnestly labour to complete yourselves in all proper knowledge: not merely the introductory kinds, which unhappily are often almost the only ones, taught the candidates for holy orders; but those chiefly which have a closer connection with your work. And though, amongst these, the science of morals and natural religion is highly to be valued, yet the doctrines and precepts of the gospel require your principal regard beyond all comparison. It is of the gospel, that you are ministers: all other learning will leave you essentially unqualified; and this alone comprehends every thing, that is necessary. Without it you will never *approve yourselves to God, as workmen that need not to be ashamed* (*b*), nor *make* your hearers *wise unto salvation* (*c*). Therefore you must diligently peruse the holy scriptures, and as much as you can of them in the original; *that*, as the office of ordination expresses it, *by daily reading and weighing of them ye may wax riper and stronger in your ministry*. And you must not grudge the expence, which may surely be well spared in some other things, of procuring, according to your abilities, the assistance, both of such commentators, as will best shew you the true sense of holy writ; and of such also, as will best direct you how to draw from it needful instructions. General systems of theology and particular treatises on points of moment, will enlarge your stock of matter: and the most noted sermons will be patterns to you of composition.

For I suppose the discourses, even of those who have the lowest qualifications, to be, in a great measure at least, of their own composition. Else they will seldom either sufficiently suit the congregation to which they are delivered, or be delivered in the manner which they ought. Besides, if persons decline taking the trouble, they will probably also decline that of fitting themselves in other ways for parochial usefulness, and throw away their time unwisely, if not worse. That will soon be observed to their disadvantage; and if once it be suspected, that through inca-

(*b*) 2 Tim. ii. 15. (*c*) 2 Tim. iii. 15.

incapacity or idleneſs they ſteal what they preach, they will have ſmall influence, if any. I do not mean, that no uſe ought to be made of the labours of others: for indeed I have made no little uſe of them in what I am ſaying, and about to ſay. I would have young Clergymen, eſpecially, make very great uſe of the works of able divines: not inconſiderately and ſervilely tranſcribe them; but ſtudy, digeſt, contract, amplify, vary, adapt to their purpoſe, improve if poſſible, what they find in them. For thus it will fairly become their own; mix naturally with what proceeds altogether from themſelves; and preſerve their youthful productions from the imputation of being empty and jejune. In the choice of ſuch authors you will conſider religious and judicious friends, always joining your own experience. Thoſe writers, whom you find the moſt effectual to enlighten your underſtandings, convince you of your faults, animate you to good reſolutions, and guide and ſupport you in the execution of them, will beſt help you to produce the ſame effect on others. Theſe therefore imitate: but with judgment. If, amidſt their excellencies, you obſerve miſtakes, defects, redundancies, flights indiſcreetly high, deſpicably familiar condeſcenſions, ſallies over-vehement; beware of adopting any of them. And remember too that a very cloſe imitation, of ſingularities above all, will both betray you, and be diſguſtful.

When you go about to prepare an inſtruction for your people, firſt conſider carefully of a proper ſubject and text: begging God to direct your choice, and diſpoſe you to treat them in a proper way. Chuſing a text, without need, that will ſurpriſe, or a ſeeming barren one, to ſhew what your art can extract from it, will appear ingenious perhaps to ſome, but vanity to moſt with good reaſon. Chuſing one, that requires much accommodating to your purpoſe, is but miſpending pains and time: and ſo is labouring to clear up a very obſcure one, unleſs it be of great importance. And giving a new tranſlation or ſenſe of a text, unleſs the preſent hath conſiderable inconveniences, will only puzzle your audience, and tempt them to doubt, whether they underſtand the reſt of their bible. Such a text is moſt convenient, as will branch out of itſelf into the main parts of your diſcourſe: but at leaſt you ſhould make it appear to be the ground-work of your diſcourſe, and not an after-thought.

Plan your method in the beginning of your compoſition; but change it afterwards, if you ſee cauſe. Never run the matter of one head into another, nor digreſs to any thing foreign: for every ſubject, well conſidered, will afford you enough. It is uſually beſt to propoſe your general heads together, before you proceed upon them ſeparately, and to give notice when you come to each. Subdiviſions alſo aſſiſt the memory of the hearer, if they are not too many: and paſſing from a former head to the next by an eaſy tranſition, is graceful. But a diſpoſition may be very orderly, without mentioning in form the ſeveral members, of which it conſiſts: and ſometimes that formality prevents a diſcourſe from flowing with freedom and ſpirit. After the explanatory part, proofs from reaſon and ſcripture take the next place: then inferences, if any uſeful ones follow peculiarly from what hath preceded; and laſtly exhortations to ſuitable practice, which can hardly ever be omitted, and ought to be ſuch as may leave a durable impreſſion. The length of ſermons, though it ſhould always be moderate, may be very different at different times.

Only give no room to think, that in a short one you have said but little; or in a long one have either said any thing which was not pertinent, or dwelt upon any thing beyond what was needful.

An indispensable point throughout is to preserve attention: for if that be not paid, all your labour is lost. And persons are singularly apt to be inattentive to preachers. Our subjects are, and ought to be, the most common and trite of any. And hence, unless we use a little honest art to prevent it, our people will think, will many of them find indeed, that they know beforehand most of what we shall deliver to them, and so will soon grow weary of minding us. Coming to church, the bulk of mankind, even still, consider as a duty: but hearing as they ought, they partly neglect, and partly experience to be difficult. Therefore we must not only admonish, but assist them. For this end we must shew them from first to last, that we are not merely saying good things in their presence, but directing what we say to them personally, as a matter which concerns them beyond expression. More general discourses they often want skill to take home to themselves; and oftener yet inclination: so they sit all the while stupidly regardless of what is delivered. Therefore we must interest them in it, by calling upon them to observe, by asking them questions to answer silently in their own minds, by every prudent incitement to follow us closely. But then we must make them understand, that in preaching against sin we never preach against such or such a sinner; but mean to amend and improve all, who want it: wishing every one to apply as much as possible of what he hears to his own benefit, but nothing to the reproach of his neighbour.

Still you will press them in vain to pay attention, unless you win them to it by what you have to say. And one principal contrivance for that purpose is to make your sermons extremely clear. Terms and phrases may be familiar to you, which are quite unintelligible to them: and I fear this happens much oftener, than we suspect. Therefore guard against it. Your expressions may be very common, without being low: yet employ the lowest, provided they are not ridiculous, rather than not be understood. Let your sentences, and the parts of them, be short, where you can. And place your words so, especially in the longer, that your meaning may be evident all the way. For if they take it not immediately, they have no time to consider of it, as they might in reading a book: and if they are perplexed in the beginning of a period, they will never attempt going on with you to the end: but give up the whole, as out of their reach. Avoid rusticity and grossness in your style: yet be not too fond of smooth and soft and flowing language; but study to be nervous and expressive; and bear the censure of being unpolished, rather than uninfluencing. Never multiply arguments beyond necessity; for they will only tire: abstain from weak ones; for they will discredit the strong. Employ no arguments to prove things, which need not be proved: for you will only make them doubtful. Employ no long or subtle arguments to prove any thing: but rest your assertions on the dictates of plain good sense. Never express yourselves on any point, as *having dominion over the faith* (*d*) of your hearers; but lay before them the best evidence, of which they are capable. In matters too high for them, let them

(*d*) 2 Cor. i. 24.

hem know, in a modeſt manner, that you ſpeak the ſentiments of the nore learned, in which providence hath by their ſtation directed them to cquieſce: in others, reaſon more at large, in the ſpirit of St. *Paul*, when e told the Corinthians, *I ſpeak as to wiſe men: judge ye what I ſay* (*e*).

You might perhaps give more entertainment, and procure more ap-lauſe, by diſregarding ſome of theſe directions. But your buſineſs is, not o pleaſe or be admired, but to do good: to make men think not of your bilities, attainments, or eloquence, but of the ſtate of their own ſouls; nd to fix them in the belief and practice of what will render them happy ow and to eternity. For this purpoſe (obſerve further) it will by no neans ſuffice to teach them outward regularity and decency; and let hem fancy they have religion enough, when they come to church pretty onſtantly, and live as well as their neighbours: though, in ſome re-pects, ill, and, ſcarce in any, well from a principle of conſcience. Or e they from a ſenſe of duty ever ſo honeſt, and ſober, and chaſte, and beneficent; another indiſpenſable part of morals is the diſcipline of the nward man. And affectionate piety is full as neceſſary, as morals can e: and goſpel piety no leſs than natural.

Here then lay your foundation: and ſet before your people the lament-ble condition of fallen man, the numerous actual ſins, by which they ave made it worſe, the redemption wrought out for them by Jeſus Chriſt, the nature and importance of true faith in him, their abſolute eed of the grace of the divine Spirit in order to obey his precepts. This vill be addreſſing yourſelves to them as Chriſtian miniſters ought to Chriſtian hearers. The holy Scriptures will furniſh you with matter or it abundantly. Short and plain reaſonings, founded on their autho-ity, will dart conviction into every mind: whereas if your doctrine and our ſpeech be not that of their bibles; if you contradict, or explain way, or paſs over in ſilence, any thing taught there, they who are beſt ontented with you, will learn little from you; and others will be of-ended, and quit you when they can. We have in fact loſt many of our eople to ſectaries by not preaching in a manner ſufficiently evangelical: nd ſhall neither recover them from the extravagancies, into which they ave run, nor keep more from going over to them, but by returning to he right way: *declaring all the counſel of God* (*f*); and that principally, *ot in the words, which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt eacheth* (*g*).

Yet the obſcurer of ſcriptural paſſages we ſhall do well to omit: or, there be need, illuſtrate them, as far as we can, briefly: not to aim at inute explanations of myſteries; but urge the belief of them from de-iſive paſſages of God's word, quoted according to its real import, and ave them as that hath left them. For by attempting to throw in more ght, than our preſent ſtate admits, you will only dazzle and blind thoſe, ho *ſaw* before as *through a glaſs darkly* (*h*).

You are debtors indeed *both to the wiſe and to the unwiſe* (*i*). But re-ember, the ignorant are by far the greateſt number: and unneceſſary nowledge, if you could communicate it to them, is of ſmall uſe. But you ill never be able to enlarge on abſtruſe and difficult points to the edi-

(*e*) 1 Cor. x. 15. (*f*) Acts xx. 27. (*g*) 1 Cor. ii. 13.
(*h*) 1 Cor. xiii. 12. (*i*) Rom. i. 14.

fication of the generality: whereas you may dwell on the plainest to th satisfaction and improvement of the most learned. It is true, declining to shew reading or acuteness may be to some a painful self-denial: bu able judges will easily perceive, both that you could shew them, and wh you do not. Therefore enter but little, if at all, into matters abou which your hearers are not likely to err, at least dangerously. Ye suffer not either the evidence or the fundamentals of Christianity, or th honour of the Protestant religion, or of the established church, to want due support, when you are any way called to the defence of them. A such times demonstrate your zeal; but be sure to do it with Christia temper; *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves* (*k*): at others avoid a controversial manner, and confine yourselves to brief instruction on these heads.

It may possibly sometimes be necessary in our sermons to vindicat our rights, and *magnify our office* (*l*). But this must be done very sparingl and cautiously; so as to cut off all pretence, that we *take the oversight o God's flock*, either *for filthy lucre*, or from a desire of *being lords over his he ritage* (*m*). We must never set up an undue, never a suspicious claim but confess, that the *treasure* of the Gospel is committed to us entirel for the sake of others, not our own; and that *we have it in earthen ves sels* (*n*); are liable to continual imperfections and frailties. Such humi lity is no less our wisdom, than our duty. For that Clergyman will al ways acquire the greatest respect, who shews the most care to deserve it and the least eagerness to demand it.

Every part of your discourses must preserve the gravity and the ear nestness, which is inseparable from subjects of a religious nature. If yo can speak of these lightly and negligently, your auditors will suspect yo have little concern about them: they of course will have less in hearing you: their thoughts will wander to the ends of the earth, or their atten tion to every thing be buried in sleep. But though languid in no part you will however be comparatively cool in expositions of Scripture, i doctrinal, in casuistical points, reserving your chief warmth for the grea articles of Christian practice. There your very utmost endeavours wil be needful to produce in your people a due sense of guilt and unworthi ness, fervent desires of pardon, love to him who hath loved them, resig nation to God's pleasure, firm purposes of obeying his laws; to caution them effectually against profaneness, lukewarmness, formality, resent ment, hard-heartedness, unjust love of gain, fondness of unlawful indul gences; to inspire them with good will towards all men, with propor tionably kind regards to those who stand nearer relations to them, di ligence to be useful in their several stations, reasonable indifference to wards the things of this life, pious longings for a better. Their degree of knowledge, rank and circumstances of life, their prevailing notions an customs, will afford you much further employment, to make your ser mons local, if I may so express it; calculated to promote the virtue which they are chiefly called to exercise, and guard against the sins, o which they are chiefly in danger. For what perfectly suits one congre gation may be extremely foreign from the exigences of another. An

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(*k*) 2 Tim. ii. 25. (*l*) Rom. xi. 13. (*m*) 1 Pet. v. 2, 3.
(*n*) 2 Cor. iv. 7.

further ſtill you muſt not only urge them to do their duty, but to uſe the means of doing it; which muſt be pointed out to them: avoiding temptations, keeping clear of bad company, contracting friendſhips with ſerious and prudent perſons, employing themſelves in proper buſineſs, reading good books, forming pious, yet prudent, reſolutions, and begging, in private prayer, *grace to help in time of need* (*o*): not ſtrictly confining their devotions to any forms, though forms are very uſeful, but varying them according to their ſpiritual condition. Theſe are the things, on which you muſt inſiſt with your whole force: *not as pleaſing men, but God, which trieth our hearts* (*p*).

Yet, while you take without reſerve all requiſite freedom, you muſt alſo take care not to provoke, inſtead of reforming them; but ſhew, that you ſincerely wiſh well to them; and think as well of them as you can: you muſt praiſe them when you have opportunity; give them cautions oftener than reproofs, and never reprove harſhly; but expreſs a fatherly concern, rather than anger, at their faults. Repreſent no fault as worſe than it is: and carry no injunction to any extravagant height. If you do, they will either think you unreaſonable, or themſelves incapable of becoming good; or will run into ſome abſurdity by attempting it. And for their encouragement, along with the duties, lay before them, in a ſtrong light, the comforts alſo, preſent and future, of religion.

It is but too poſſible, that ſometimes you muſt excite your people to virtues, in which you are, more or leſs, deficient yourſelves. For it would be heinous unfaithfulneſs to omit or explain away neceſſary precepts becauſe you are imperfect in the practice of them. And lamentable is our caſe, if there be any Chriſtian obligation, on which we dare not for ſhame ſpeak freely: ye ſtill worſe, if we harden our conſciences, till we venture boldly to enjoin what we habitually tranſgreſs. For in that caſe, not only our credit will be utterly loſt, but our amendment almoſt abſolutely hopeleſs. Therefore correct your own hearts and lives in the firſt place by the diſcourſes which you compoſe: become in all points good men; and then you may fearleſsly ſpeak on all points like ſuch.

Yet even good men muſt obſerve a difference. Thoſe of leſs knowledge muſt expreſs themſelves with leſs poſitiveneſs, thoſe of leſs gravity and diſcretion with leſs authority and ſtrictneſs, than their betters. And every one ſhould conſider, what his age and ſtanding, reputation for learning, prudence and piety, will ſupport him in ſaying; that he may not take more upon him, than will be allowed him. Yet all muſt aſſiduouſly take pains to acquire, and preſerve, ſuch eſteem, that they may ſay with propriety whatever their function requires. For how unhappy would it be to diſqualify yourſelves from uſefulneſs by levity or indiſcretion!

But even the beſt qualified to exhort muſt keep within due bounds; convince the judgment before they attempt to warm the paſſions; riſe gradually into what deſerves the name of vehemence; and be ſure neither to riſe any higher, nor continue in that ſtrain any longer, than they are likely to carry their auditors along with them. For if they are cold, while the preacher is pathetic, the impreſſion made upon them will be very

(*o*) Heb. iv. 16. (*p*) 1 Theſſ. ii. 4.

very different from what he wiſhes. And our nation is more diſpoſed, than moſt others, to approve a temperate manner of ſpeaking. Every thing, which can be called oratory, is apt to be deemed affectation: and if it goes a great length, raiſes contempt and ridicule. But were the moſt ſerious emotions to be raiſed by mere mechanical vehemence, they would be unfairly raiſed: and what is beyond nature will uſually ſoon ſubſide; perhaps with ſcorn, upon reflection, of what was admired when heard. Or ſuppoſing ſuch admiration to continue, bad effects may as poſſibly follow as good: whereas warmth of affection, excited to a proper degree by the rational enforcement of ſolid arguments, promiſes to be durable, and will never do harm. The faculty of moving hearers thus, is a moſt valuable bleſſing. And ſuch, as have but little of it, may conſiderably improve it, by labouring to affect themſelves deeply with what they would ſay: and thinking, what methods of ſaying it will be moſt perſuaſive. But they muſt not attempt to force an unwilling genius too far. If they do, what it produces will be ſo ungraceful and unſucceſsful, that they had much better content themſelves to do as well as they can in their own way.

Your delivery muſt in the firſt place be ſuch, that you can be heard; elſe you preach in vain: beſides that ſpeaking too low argues indolence and indifference; whereas an audible exertion is a mark of earneſtneſs: and the common people are peculiarly pleaſed, when their miniſter appears to take pains about them. But then you muſt neither be precipitately quick, (for if your words be underſtood, your meaning will not) nor tediouſly ſlow; nor ſink any one part of your ſentence under its proper level, eſpecially the concluding part. Diſtinctneſs will do much to ſupply want of ſtrength in ſpeaking: which however it is very material that you ſhould try to remedy gradually, as many have done, by a prudent exerciſe of your voice. Yet ſtraining beyond your due pitch will give your hearers pain, make you in ſome degree inarticulate, and produce a ſinging ſort of cadence and tone. This laſt indeed hath been ſometimes known to pleaſe weak perſons: but it cannot poſſibly make them either wiſer or better: and it offends the judicious extremely. Many learn in their childhood a provincial dialect; which they cannot lay aſide eaſily; and yet ſhould endeavour it, eſpecially if they ſettle in a different part of the nation. Some acquire uncouth accents one knows not how: ſome bring them from the ſchool or the college: and now and then one ſeems to hear a theatrical pronounciation; which hath been condemned even by heathen writers upon oratory; and is the very worſt, that a Chriſtian orator can adopt. It reminds his hearers, greatly to his diſcredit, where he muſt probably have learnt it: he will alſo appear by means of it to be only acting a part, and be regarded accordingly. Indeed all remarkable imitation, in delivery as well as compoſition, though of a perſon in your own profeſſion, and one juſtly admired, will be diſliked. You will never attain to an advantageous reſemblance of his manner: but, by a miſtaken or overdone mimicry, turn what perhaps may be graceful in the original, into oddneſs. Or could you avoid that, you would leſſen your weight and influence: which muſt ariſe from ſpeaking in your own character, not perſonating another. Every man's voice and utterance, as well as his face, belongs to himſelf alone; and it

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is vain to think either of looking or talking like ſuch or ſuch a one. Therefore preſerve what is native to you: free it from adventitious faults: improve it, if you can: but remember, that you may deprave it by the endeavour; and certainly will, if you change it eſſentially. Speak to your people, as you would in converſation, when you undertake to inform or perſuade a friend, in a concern of great moment; only with more deliberateneſs, more ſtrength and energy, in porportion to the numbers: and vary both your ſtile and your elocution, as in converſation you always do, ſuitably to your matter. For monotony both abſolutely prevents emotion, and ſoon deadens attention. It is worſt indeed, when uniformly unnatural, by degenerating into a kind of chant. But merely to be uniformly inexpreſſive, be it through heavineſs, or effeminacy, or inſignificant lightneſs, is either very blamable, or, if it cannot be helped, very unhappy. And perhaps a little even of injudicious variety is better than a wearisome ſameneſs.

In public ſpeaking, perſons commonly fall into errors, and ſometimes great ones, without perceiving it, though they can obſerve ſmall ones in others. Therefore you will act prudently in deſiring ſome well-wiſher, on whoſe judgment and frankneſs you can depend, to advertiſe you of any thing wrong in the conduct of your voice, or in your action; and you will ſhew your gratitude and good ſenſe by ſtudying to amend it.

We of this nation are not given to uſe or to admire much action, either in ordinary diſcourſe, or even in popular harangues. And, were it for this reaſon only, a preacher ſhould be moderate in it. But beſides, in the nature of the thing, you had far better have none, than what is unbecoming, or unmeaning, or unſuitable to what you are ſaying, or repeated at certain diſtances, whatever you are ſaying. Yet ſomewhat of geſture, appearing to be artleſs, and regulated by propriety, may be very uſeful, eſpecially in the warmer parts, of exhortation, reproof, or even argument. For to be altogether motionleſs, when the ſubject is animating, and our language perhaps vehement, ſeems an inconſiſtency; and may raiſe a doubt, whether we are in earneſt. But ſtill defect in action is better than exceſs. And a great deal cannot well be uſed by thoſe who read their ſermons.

This is one objection againſt reading them: and there are ſeveral beſides. Perſons, who are ſhort-ſighted, have peculiar reaſons to avoid it. Indeed almoſt all perſons are accuſtomed from their early years to read in a different tone, from that in which they ſpeak at other times: and we ſeldom correct it thoroughly. Or if we did, what we ſay in ſuch manner as to make it ſeem the preſent dictate of our own hearts, will much better make its way into the hearts of others, than if our eyes are fixed all the while on a paper, from which we viſibly recite the whole. It will ordinarily be uttered too with more diſengaged freedom and livelier ſpirit. The preacher alſo will be abler to enforce his words by ſignificant looks: to perceive from the countenances of his hearers, what they comprehend, and by what they are moved; and may accordingly enlarge on that head, or proceed to another, as he finds cauſe. He may likewiſe oppoſe with ſucceſs irregular itinerant declaimers, who affect and gain popularity by this method: and as their credulous followers are apt to think it a ſupernatural gift, he may undeceive them by imitating

in this caſe the practice of St. *Paul* in another, which he deſcribes thus: *what I do, that I will do; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we* (*q*). But then there muſt be a long and diligent preparation to do this well: ſome will ſcarce ever attain ſufficient preſence of mind, and readineſs of expreſſion: others will acquit themſelves handſomely in a good flow of ſpirits, but meanly when theſe fail them: and though little inaccuracies will be obſerved by few, yet heſitations will by all, and every other conſiderable fault by ſenſible hearers, to the preacher's great diſgrace. Or if ſuch do get the faculty of being always able to ſay ſomething plauſible, it will tempt them to neglect the improvement of their underſtandings and their diſcourſes; and to be content with digreſſing, whenever they are at a loſs, from their text and their ſubject, to any point, on which they can be copious: to utter off hand ſuch crudities, as they could not bear to write down; and think the meaneſt of extempore effuſions good enough for the populace. Now on the contrary, previouſly ſtudying and writing ſermons tends to fill them with well digeſted and well adapted matter, diſpoſed in right order: eſpecially, if you will carefully reviſe them every time you preach them; ſupply deficiencies, blot out repetitions, correct improprieties, guard againſt miſapprehenſions, enlighten what is obſcure, familiarize what is too high, tranſpoſe what is wrongly placed, ſtrengthen the weak parts, animate the languid ones. Your compoſition needs not be at all the ſtiffer, but may be the freer, for the pains thus employed upon it. You may frame it purpoſely to be ſpoken as if you were not reading it: and by looking it over a few times when you are about to uſe it, you may deliver it almoſt without being obſerved to read it. The more you acquire of this art, the more you will be liked, and the ſtronger impreſſion you will make. But after all, *every man*, as the apoſtle ſaith on a different occaſion, *hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, another after that* (*r*): let each cultivate his own; and no one cenſure or deſpiſe his brother. There is a middle way, uſed by our predeceſſors, of ſetting down, in ſhort notes, the method and principal heads, and enlarging on them in ſuch words as preſent themſelves at the time. Perhaps, duly managed, this would be the beſt. That which is, or lately was, common amongſt foreign divines, of writing ſermons firſt, then getting and repeating them by heart, not only is unreaſonably laborious, but ſubjects perſons to the hazard of ſtopping diſagreeably, and even breaking off abruptly, for want of memory. Or if they eſcape that danger, there ſtill remains another, of ſaying their leſſon with ungraceful marks of fear and caution.

Inſtead of taking a text, which comprehends within itſelf the whole ſubject, of which you would treat, it may often be uſeful to chuſe one, which hath a reference to things preceding and following, and to expound all the context. This will afford you a variety of matter, and give you opportunities for ſhort unexpected remarks; with which perſons are frequently more ſtruck, than with an entire diſcourſe; for of the latter they foreſee the drift all the way, and therefore ſet themſelves to fence againſt it. Thus alſo you may illuſtrate the beauties, at the ſame time that you ſhew the practical uſes, of large portions of ſcripture at once: for inſtance, of a parable, a converſation, a miracle, of our bleſſed Lord; or

(*q*) 2 Cor. xi. 12. (*r*) 1 Cor. vii. 7.

or a narration concerning this or that other memorable perſon, whether deſerving of praiſe or blame. For ſcripture hiſtories and examples are eaſily remembered, and have great weight. In proportion as we overlook them, we ſhall appear leſs to be miniſters of God's word: and our people will have leſs veneration for us, or for it, or for both. You may alſo in this method, as you go along, obviate objections to paſſages of God's word without ſtating them in form, at which otherwiſe many may ſtumble, if they read with attention: and if they do not attend, they will read with no profit. Several things in holy writ ſeem to be ſtrange; hardly conſiſtent one with another, or with our natural notions. Of theſe difficulties, which muſt always perplex perſons, and may often deliver them over a prey to infidels, you may occaſionally remove one and another; meddling with none, but ſuch as you can overcome: and from your ſucceſs in theſe, you may obſerve to your auditors the probability, that others are capable of ſolutions alſo. Perhaps they will forget your ſolution: but they will remember that they heard one, and may have it repeated to them, if they pleaſe. By theſe means you will teach your people, what is grievouſly wanting in the preſent age, to value their bibles more, and underſtand them better; and to read them both with pleaſure and profit, drawing from them uſeful inferences and obſervations, as they have heard you do. Formerly courſes of lectures on whole books of ſcripture were cuſtomary in churches; and they were doubtleſs extremely beneficial. It would not be eaſy, if poſſible, to revive theſe now: but the practice, which I have been propoſing to you, is ſome approach towards them.

I would alſo adviſe you to inſtruct your pariſhoners, amongſt other things, from ſome proper text or texts, in the daily and occaſional ſervices of the church: not with a view to extol either immoderately, much leſs to provoke wrath againſt thoſe who diſſent from us; but mildly to anſwer unjuſt imputations upon our liturgy, and chiefly to ſhew the meaning, the reaſons, the uſes of each part; that your congregations may, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, *pray with the underſtanding* (*s*). In all compoſitions, there will be ſome things, which to ſome perſons want explaining: and, were the whole ever ſo clear, men are ſtrangely apt both to hear and to ſpeak words, that are become familiar to them, with ſcarce any attention to their ſenſe. And ſo by degrees a bodily attendance and worſhip becomes all that they pay: and they return home almoſt as little edified, as they would by devotions in a tongue unknown. Convincing them of this fault, and aſſiſting them to mend it, muſt greatly contribute to the promotion of true piety amongſt them. Nor will it be a ſmall benefit, if, in the courſe of your liturgical inſtructions, you can perſuade the bulk of your congregations to join in the decent uſe of pſalmody, as their forefathers did; inſtead of the preſent ſhameful neglect of it by almoſt all, and the conceited abuſe of it by a few.

But a fervent deſire of being uſeful will teach you more than any particular directions can, upon every head. Without this deſire, you will either be negligent; or if you would ſeem zealous, you will be detected for want of uniformity and perſeverance. Therefore make ſure firſt that all be right within, and *out of the good treaſure of the heart you will bring forth*

(*s*) 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

forth good things (*t*), naturally and prudently, and, through the grace of the holy Spirit, effectually. It is not eaſy indeed even to inſtruct the willing; much leſs to convince the unwilling, and reform the wicked. But ſtill theſe are the purpoſes, for which we are God's embaſſadors: and we muſt try with indefatigable perſeverance, every way to execute our commiſſion. We muſt ſtudy human nature in our own breaſts, and thoſe of others: we muſt acquaint ourſelves, by all innocent means, with the opinions and practices of the world, eſpecially of our hearers, that we may lay their hearts and minds open to their view, and make them feel what we ſay. We muſt conſider all the while we compoſe, and reconſider as we preach and afterwards: "Is this adapted ſufficiently to the capacities, "the ſtate of mind, the circumſtances of the poor people who are to hear "it: will this part be clear, that home enough, a third well guarded "againſt miſtakes: will they go back as much better diſpoſed than they "came, as it is in our power to make them?" Perhaps one or more ways of repreſenting a neceſſary doctrine or duty have failed. We muſt think, whether a more likely may not be found, or a leſs likely in appearance prove more ſucceſsful.

If you have preached a conſiderable time in a place, and done little or no good; there muſt, in all probability, be ſome fault, not only in your hearers, but in you or your ſermons. *For the word of God*, when duly diſpenſed, is to this day, as it was originally, *powerful, and ſharper than a two-edged ſword* (*u*). Inquire then, where the fault may be. Never deſpair, nor be immoderately grieved, if your ſucceſs be ſmall: but be not indifferent about it: do not content yourſelves with the indolent plea, that you have done your duty, and are not anſwerable for the event. You may have done it as far as the law requires: yet by no means have diſcharged your conſciences. You may have done it conſcientiouſly, yet not with the diligence or the addreſs that you ought. And as we are ſeldom eaſy in other caſes, when we fail of our end; if we are ſo in this, it doth not look well. At leaſt conſult your hearts upon the point. And if you have been deficient, beg of God pardon, grace and direction: endeavour to do more for your people: conſult your brethren about the means. Converſation of this nature will much better become Clergymen when they meet, than any which is not relative to their profeſſion, or only relative to the profits of it. But eſpecially aſk the advice of the moſt able and ſerious.

I am very ſenſible, that in all the particulars before-mentioned I have been far from obſerving ſufficiently myſelf the rules which I have now recommended to you: but hope I ſhall make ſome amends, though late, to the church of Chriſt, by exhorting and directing others. It was my purpoſe, after ſpeaking of ſtated inſtructions, to have proceeded to occaſional ones: a very important and ſadly neglected part of the paſtoral care. But my ſtrength will not ſuffice: and I have detained you already too long. If God ſpare me to another like occaſion, that ſhall be my ſubject. If not, as is moſt probable, I ſhall endeavour to leave behind me ſome admonitions to you concerning it (*w*). At preſent I can only intreat you to conſider very ſeriouſly, what numbers there are in moſt pariſhes,

(*t*) Matth. xii. 35. (*u*) Heb. iv. 12.
(*w*) Nothing of this kind hath been found among his Grace's papers.

pariſhes, and therefore perhaps in yours, whom you cannot think to be in a ſtate of ſalvation; and how greatly it imports you to uſe with them, as you ſolemnly promiſed at your ordination, not only *public* but *private monitions, as need ſhall require, and occaſion ſhall be given.* The eternal welfare of many poor creatures may depend on this: and your own is deeply concerned in it, as God himſelf hath declared: who will certainly expect, that what he requires you to do, be done to the very utmoſt of your ability. *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. If thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. But if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedneſs, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul* (*x*.)

(*x*) Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9.

INSTRUC-

INSTRUCTIONS

GIVEN TO

CANDIDATES

FOR

ORDERS,

After their ſubſcribing the ARTICLES.

Gentlemen,

YOU have now made the ſubſcription by law required. And as, in ſo doing, you have acknowledged the liturgy and articles of the church of England to be agreeable to the word of God; I hope you will think yourſelves bound, as you are, to be careful, that the inſtructions which you give, and the doctrines which you maintain, in public and in private, be agreeable to that liturgy and thoſe articles: that you neither contradict, nor omit to inculcate and defend, on proper occaſions, the truths which they contain.

In the next place I exhort you to ſpend a due ſhare of the remainder of this day in what, I truſt, hath employed not a little of your time already; weighing diligently the nature and importance of the undertaking, in which you are about to engage; forming ſuitable reſolutions; and earneſtly

neſtly begging that grace of God, which alone can *make you able miniſters of the New Teſtament* (*a*).

Nothing is better fitted to aſſiſt you in this good work, than the office of ordination, of deacons or prieſts, as you are reſpectively concerned. You muſt certainly have read it over, before you offered yourſelves. Since that you have been directed to read it again. But I deſire you to peruſe it once more this afternoon with your beſt attention, that you may join in it to-morrow with a greater degree of rational ſerioufneſs; and particularly, that you may anſwer, on more deliberate conſideration, the queſtions, which will then be put to you. For there can hardly be a caſe, in which either inſincerity, or even thoughtleſſneſs, would carry in it heavier guilt.

And that you may be in no perplexity concerning the meaning or fitneſs of any part of the office, it may be uſeful to go through ſome parts of it along with you beforehand, proceeding as they lie in the book.

The firſt thing, which candidates, both for deacons and prieſts orders, after they are preſented, are required to do, as diſtinct from the reſt of the congregation, is to take the oaths of allegiance and ſupremacy. For, as you are to be miniſters of the church eſtabliſhed by law in this nation, it is evidently reaſonable, that the civil government, eſtabliſhed by law, ſhould be aſſured of the fidelity and affection of perſons to whom it gives and ſecures privileges and profits; and who are intruſted with the care, amongſt other matters, of making men good ſubjects. Now theſe oaths bind every perſon, who takes them, to *honour the king* (*b*), and by conſequence all that are put in authority under him, both in word and deed; and to *lead*, in ſubjection to them, *quiet and peaceable lives* (*c*). That theſe things may with a good conſcience be promiſed and performed there is no juſt cauſe of doubt. But if any one thinks there is, he ought to apply for ſatisfaction: and till he receives it, he ought to abſtain from taking the oaths. *For whatever is not of faith, is ſin* (*d*): and in this caſe it would be no leſs, than perjury. Nothing is a plea ſufficient for committing any ſin, much leſs one ſo heinous: not even all the force, that can be uſed. But here is no ſhadow of force. You are come voluntarily to offer yourſelves, well knowing that the oaths muſt be tendered to you: that is, you have made it your choice to take them.

But by your ſubſcription you have entered into a further obligation: to uſe the liturgy in all your public miniſtrations (*e*): and therefore, to pray for the king by name, for his long life and proſperity, for his obtaining victory over all his enemies. God forbid, that any one, who doth this, ſhould be diſaffected to the government, under which we live. And if we are friends, it is both our duty and our wiſdom to ſhew that we are. For thus we ſhall ſtrengthen an eſtabliſhment, on which, under God, the ſafe enjoyment of our religion entirely depends; we ſhall procure the ſupport, which we cannot but be ſenſible, that we want; and we ſhall ſilence, or at leaſt confute thoſe, who love to ſpeak deſpitefully againſt us on this head.

After

(*a*) 2 Cor. iii. 6.
(*b*) 1 Pet. ii. 17.
(*c*) 1 Tim. ii. 2.
(*d*) Rom. xiv. 23.
(*e*) Can. 36.

After the oaths, Candidates for deacons orders are aſked: *Do you truſt that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take upon you this office and miniſtration?* A ſolemn queſtion: and which ought to be well conſidered, before it is anſwered. Obſerve then: it is not ſaid, *Do you feel*; have you an immediate perception of ſuch an impulſe from the Holy Ghoſt, as you can diſtinguiſh from all other inward movements by its manner of impreſſing you: but, *Do you truſt*; are you on good grounds perſuaded? What then are the proper grounds of ſuch perſuaſion?

In the firſt place, if he hath not moved you effectually to live *ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly* (*f*), you may be ſure he hath not moved you to aſſume the office of a miniſter in God's church. Examine yourſelves therefore ſtrictly on this point: a moſt important one to all men; but to you, if poſſible, above all: and before you preſume to officiate in his houſe, aſk your hearts, Do you tranſgreſs, do you omit, no duty, wilfully or knowingly? Have you a genuine practical faith in Chriſt? Are you, on the terms of the Goſpel covenant, intitled to everlaſting life? But ſuppoſing that you are, more is requiſite in the preſent caſe: and what more, the latter part of the queſtion points out. *To ſerve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his church.* This then being the deſign of the office; if, ſo far as you know your own hearts, this is your motive to deſire it; and if, ſo far as you can judge of your own abilities and attainments, they are equal to it in ſome competent degree; then you may ſafely anſwer, that *you truſt you are moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take it upon you.* For *we* can *have ſuch truſt to Godward* only *through Chriſt*, who hath ſent us the Spirit: *we are not ſufficient to* do or *think any thing as of ourſelves: but our ſufficiency is of God* (*g*). Together with this principal motive, of *ſerving God* by *edifying his people*, you may allowably have the ſubordinate one, of providing a decent maintenance for your own ſupport, and for thoſe who may belong to you: but if you are indifferent or cool about the former, and attentive only or chiefly to the latter: ſince you cannot think that ſuch diſpoſitions are approved by the Holy Spirit, as proper for the miniſtry, you will be guilty of *lying to him* (*h*), if you affirm, that he hath moved you to enter on it with them. Therefore inſpect your ſoul thoroughly; and form them, by the help of Divine grace, to be duly influenced by the right principle, before you venture to anſwer this queſtion: which is very wiſely made the leading one; becauſe your inducement will be the rule of your behaviour, and probably alſo the meaſure of your ſucceſs.

The next queſtion, put to thoſe who apply for deacons orders, and the firſt to ſuch as have received them, and deſire to be admitted prieſts, is, *Do you think, that you are truly called according to the will of Chriſt, and the due order of this realm, to the miniſtry of the church?* That is, are you conſcious neither of any defect in body or mind, nor of any other impediment, which may, for the preſent, if not for ever, be, according to the laws of God or man, a juſt obſtacle in your way? Such things may eſcape our knowledge or memory. Therefore we call upon you to inform us. And you are bound to anſwer with ſincerity.

It

(*f*) Tit. ii. 12.
(*g*) 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5. (*h*) Acts v. 3.

It is not requiſite, that I ſhould enlarge on every queſtion; though it , that you ſhould weigh every one ſeriouſly. That, which recites the uties of deacons, may ſeem to have ſome difficulty in it: as it aſſigns o them occupations, which the Acts of the Apoſtles do not, in the hiſ- ory of their appointment (*i*); and as they are but little employed now n the ſingle buſineſs, there allotted to them. But that paſſage of Scrip- ure plainly was intended to ſet forth, only the immediate and urgent eaſon of ordaining them, not the whole of what was, then or ſoon af- er, given them in charge. For we find in the ſame book, that *Philip* he deacon both preached and baptized (*k*). And the qualifications, re- uired in deacons by St. *Paul* (*l*), intimate very clearly, that more things uſt, even then, have been incumbent upon them, than adminiſtring to he relief of the poor. Accordingly, from the primitive ages downwards, hey are deſcribed as performing occaſionally moſt of the ſame offices, vhich they do now; and being, what their name denotes, aſſiſtant and ubſervient to prieſts in all proper employments (*m*). And the leſs they re engaged in their chief original one, the more opportunity and the nore need they have, to ſhew diligence in the other good works, be- onging or ſuited peculiarly to their ſtation.

The next queſtion is common to Candidates for each order: *Will you aſhion your own lives, and thoſe of your families, ſo far as in you lieth, to be vholeſome examples to the flock of Chriſt?* This extends to avoiding in our own behaviour, and reſtraining in theirs, follies, levities, mean and iſreputable actions, as well as crimes and vices. The Apoſtle enjoins *eacons, and their wives, to be grave* (*n*): much more then ought prieſts. He enjoins every Chriſtian to *abſtain from all appearance of evil* (*o*). And our bleſſed Lord enjoins all his Diſciples to *be wiſe*, as well as *harmleſs* (*p*). Therefore govern yourſelves and yours by theſe rules: and conſider fre- quently, whether you obſerve them well. For without it you will neither gain eſteem, nor do good.

The laſt queſtion, put alike to the whole number of Candidates, is, *Will you reverently obey your ordinary, and them to whom the government ver you is committed?* You would be bound to this, though you were ot to promiſe it: for both reaſon and Scripture demand it. Still more irmly you will be bound, when you have promiſed it, though it were of mall importance. But it is of very great, not only to the dignity and aſe of your ſuperiors, but to your own intereſt, and the benefit of the vhole church. Our Saviour both commands, and prayed for unity mongſt his followers in the moſt expreſſive terms (*q*). Without union here cannot be a ſufficient degree either of ſtrength or beauty: and with- out ſubordination there cannot long be union. Therefore *obey*, as the Apoſtle directs, *them that have the rule over you* (*r*); and promote their honour, their credit, their influence. This will make us abler to ſerve the

(*i*) Acts vi.
(*k*) Acts viii. 5—13, 26—44.
(*l*) 1 Tim. iii. 8—13.
(*m*) See *Bingham*'s Orig. Eccl. l. 2. c. 20.
(*n*) 1 Tim. iii. 8, 11.
(*o*) 1 Theſſ. v. 22.
(*p*) Matth. x. 16.
(*q*) John xiii. 34, 35; xvii. 11, 12, 21, 22, 23.
(*r*) Heb. xiii. 17.

the cause of religion, and protect you. And God forbid that, so far as we are able, we should ever fail to be willing and zealous.

In the office for the ordination of priests, after a pious and awful charge, which I recommend to your most serious attention, follow several questions of the greatest moment, your answers to which, I hope, you will remember to the last day of your lives. In these answers, besides what hath been already mentioned, you promise, that *the doctrine and discipline of Christ, as contained in Scripture, and received in this church and realm*, shall be the standard of your teaching and acting; and every thing contrary to them be faithfully opposed by you: that you will *use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your cures*; and that, as frequently and fully *as need shall require, and occasion be given*. You promise also, that *you will be diligent in prayers and reading the Holy Scriptures*; which by the preceding exhortation evidently appears to mean, private prayer and reading; *and in such studies as help to the knowledge of Scripture; laying aside the study of the world and the flesh:* that is, not making, either gross pleasures, or more refined amusements, even literary ones unconnected with your profession, or power, or profit, or advancement, or applause, your great aim in life; but labouring chiefly to qualify yourselves for doing good to the souls of men, and applying carefully to that purpose whatever qualifications you attain. Further yet, you promise, that *you will maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people; and especially among them, that are or shall be committed to your charge*. By this you oblige yourselves, never to raise or promote personal, family, parochial, ecclesiastical, political, or any other, animosities; but to discourage, and, if possible, compose and extinguish them; than which you cannot perform a more Christian part, or one more conducive to your honour and your usefulness.

But, besides pondering well beforehand these answers, which you are to make, I earnestly beg you, to read and think them over often afterwards: and particularly, at each return of the ember weeks to examine yourselves, as in the presence of God, whether you have made good the engagement, into which you entered at your ordination. So far as you have, this practice will afford you the greatest possible comfort: so far as you may have failed, it will suggest to you the most useful admonition.

After these questions, a short silence is appointed to be kept for the secret prayers of the congregation, that God would enable and incline you to do what you have undertaken: which blessing, I hope, you will ask at the same time for yourselves very earnestly. Then follows a hymn of considerable antiquity: and to be repeated with much reverence, on account of the important petitions and doctrines comprized in it, though it be altogether void of ornament in that old translation, which we still retain. Next to this, follows a very proper address to the Throne of Grace, pronounced by the Bishop alone, in the name of the whole assembly: which is instantly succeeded by the act of ordination.

The first words of that, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, were used by our Saviour to his Apostles, immediately after he had said, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you* (*s*). *God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him* (*t*): and

(*s*) John xx. 21, 22. (*t*) John iii. 34.

and he was able to beſtow what meaſure he pleaſed, both of ſpiritual gifts and graces, upon others. He meant however by this benediction to confer only the ordinary ones: for the extraordinary, you know, were reſerved till after his aſcenſion. Far be it from the Biſhops of his church to claim, even in reſpect of the former, the powers which he had. But ſtill theſe words in our mouths, when ſpoken over you, properly expreſs, in the firſt place, the communication of that authority, which proceeds from the Holy Ghoſt. For we read, that *the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, wherunto I have called them* (*u*): and that the latter of theſe exhorted the elders of the church of *Epheſus, Take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers* (*w*). They alſo expreſs, in the ſecond place, our earneſt requeſt to the Father of Mercies, that you may at all times enjoy ſuch proportions, both of the graces and gifts of the Spirit, as will be needful for you: which requeſt, if it be not your own fault, will prove effectual; becauſe having, in the common courſe of his Providence, appointed us, though unworthy, to act in this behalf, he will aſſuredly be ready to own and bleſs our miniſtrations.

It follows very ſoon: *whoſe ſins thou doſt forgive, they are forgiven*; *and whoſe ſins thou doſt retain, they are retained.* Theſe again are the words of Chriſt to his Apoſtles, immediately after the former. But he did not grant to them the power, either of retaining the ſins of penitent perſons, or of forgiving the impenitent. Nor do we pretend to grant, by uttering them, all the powers, which the Apoſtles had in this reſpect. They had *the diſcernment of ſpirits* (*x*): and could ſay with certainty, when perſons were penitent, and conſequently forgiven, and when not (*y*). They were able alſo to inflict miraculous puniſhments on offenders; and to remove, on their repentance, the puniſhments, which had been inflicted. Theſe words will convey nothing of all this to you. But ſtill, when we uſe them, they give you, firſt, an aſſurance, that according to the terms of that Goſpel, which you are to preach, men ſhall be pardoned or condemned: ſecondly, a right of inflicting eccleſiaſtical cenſures for a ſhorter or longer time, and of taking them off; which, in regard to external communion, is retaining or forgiving offences. This power, being beſtowed for the edification of the church, muſt be reſtrained, not only by general rules of order, but according to the particular exigencies of circumſtances. And our church wiſhes, with much reaſon, for circumſtances more favourable to the exertion of it (*z*). But how little ſoever exerted, the power is inherent in the office of prieſthood. And though we are no more infallible in our proceeding and ſentences, than temporal judges are in theirs; yet our acts, as well as theirs, are to be reſpected, as done by competent authority. And if they are done on good grounds alſo, *whatever we ſhall bind or looſe on earth, will be bound or looſed in heaven* (*a*). Nor will other proofs of repentance be ſufficient in the ſight of God, if ſubmiſſion to the diſcipline of the church of Chriſt, when it hath been offended, and requires due ſatisfaction, be obſtinately refuſed, either from haughtineſs or negligence.

To

(*u*) Acts xiii. 2. (*w*) Acts xx. 28. (*x*) 1 Cor. xii. 10.
(*y*) Acts viii. 21, 23. (*z*) Office of Commination. (*a*) Matth. xviii. 18.

To theſe words is ſubjoined the concluding charge: *and be thou a faithful diſpenſer of the word of God, and of his holy ſacraments.* This then is the ſtewardſhip committed to you. And you cannot but ſee, in what a profane and corrupt age it is committed to you: how grievouſly religion, and its miniſters, are hated or deſpiſed; how lamentably both they, and its other profeſſors, are degenerated and divided. Your buſineſs will be, each within the ſphere of his influence, to prevent theſe things from growing worſe; which, bad as they are, they ſtill may; and, if poſſible, to make them better; or at leaſt, to recover or preſerve ſuch, as you can, from the general depravity. But you will never ſucceed in your attempts for this purpoſe, either by bitterneſs againſt Infidels, Heretics and ſectaries, or by contempt and ridicule of enthuſiaſtic or ſuperſtitious perſons. The only right method is a very different one: diligent ſtudy, to fit yourſelves more completely for teaching and vindicating the truths of Chriſtianity: Scriptural and rational inſtruction, aſſiduouſly given, with zeal and mildneſs duly tempered, and ſuited to the capacities and condition of your hearers: a willing and devout and affecting performance of all ſacred rites, whether in the church or elſewhere: but above all, a behaviour, innocent, humble, peaceable, diſintereſted, beneficent, abſtemious, diſcreet, religious.

Take heed therefore to your ſteps: and walk in the preſent evil days with ſuch piety and caution, that, as the office exhorts, *you may neither offend, nor be occaſion that others offend*; but may *cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion* (*b*) againſt you; that *they who are of the contrary part, and falſely accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt, may be aſhamed* (*c*) of themſelves; or however, that your Maſter and Judge may not *be aſhamed of you* (*d*) at the great day, but pronounce over each of you, *Well done, good and faithful ſervant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord* (*e*).

(*b*) 2 Cor. xi. 12.
(*c*) Tit. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 16.
(*d*) Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26.
(*e*) Matth. xxv. 21.

A TREATISE

A

TREATISE

CONCERNING THE

CAUSES

OF THE

PRESENT CORRUPTION

OF

CHRISTIANS.

PREFACE.

WE have reaſon to wonder at the great corruptions that at preſent are to be found among Chriſtians. The religion they profeſs, does chiefly tend to ſanctify men, and to purge the world from corruption and vice; and one would think it ſhould produce that effect, ſince it affords ſuch a clear light, ſuch powerful motives, and ſuch effectual helps to holineſs. Notwithſtanding all this, whoever enquires into the notions and manners of Chriſtians, muſt have no great ſhare of ſincerity or judgment; if he does not acknowledge, that religion has but little influence upon their minds, and that there is an amazing contradiction between their lives and the rules of Chriſtianity. This corrup-

tion is ſo evident and ſo generally confeſſed, that I need not ſtand to prove it.

Taking it then for granted, that Chriſtians live in a great neglect of their duties; it is natural to enquire into the *Cauſes* of this corruption, and to conſider what remedies ſhould be applied to it. This is what I intend to do in this Treatiſe, in hopes that ſuch an enquiry will not be altogether unuſeful.

For firſt, it may contribute to maintain the honour, and the truth of the Chriſtian religion, and to confute infidels and libertines, who are apt to deſpiſe it, becauſe it's precepts are little practiſed. If religion, ſay they, be true and divine, How comes it to paſs, that it has ſo little efficacy, and that there appears ſo much diſorder and licentiouſneſs among the profeſſors of it? To undeceive ſuch men, and to infuſe into them a greater reſpect for religion, it is of very great importance to diſcover the cauſes of the decay of piety; and to ſhew, that if men are corrupted, it is not becauſe Chriſt's religion is inſufficient to introduce virtue and order into the world; but that this evil flows from ſome other cauſe, and that if Chriſtians did what they might and ought to do, true piety would not be ſo uncommon as it is amongſt them.

A ſecond advantage which may be reaped from this enquiry; is this; it will appear by it, that how great ſoever the corruption may be; it is not however, as many imagine, paſt remedy. Which imagination, is a moſt dangerous prejudice; while men look on it as impoſſible to ſtem the tide of corruption, and to re-eſtabliſh order and purity of manners in the world; they do not ſo much as attempt it, they let things go on at the ſame rate; and ſo the diſorder increaſes and ſpreads farther. It cannot be denied, but that the corruption is great, general and inveterate; but God forbid, we ſhould look upon it as an incurable diſeaſe. The fountains of it may eaſily be diſcovered; and it is not impoſſible to ſtop them. I hope this will be acknowledged by thoſe, who ſhall attentively, and without prepoſſeſſion conſider, what is propoſed in this work.

Thirdly, There is no means more likely to remove this corruption, than to cut off the occaſions of it: that is the ſureſt as well as the moſt compendious method. One of the main reaſons, why ſo many excellent books deſigned to inſpire men with a love of religion and piety, have not all the effect that might be expected from them; is, that the authors do not ſufficiently obſerve the general cauſes of the depravation of manners. It is to little purpoſe to deplore the corruption of the age, to exhort men, and to give them fine leſſons of morality: the work of reformation cannot be much advanced, as long as the evil is not taken in its cauſe, and as long as ſuch principles and abuſes continue among Chriſtians, as are, and will always be, obſtacles to the progreſs of the Goſpel.

Laſtly, I conſidered that this matter had not yet been thoroughly handled by any author, at leaſt that I know of. Of thoſe who have touched upon it in their books; ſome have confined themſelves to conſiderations purely moral, and others to theological reflections, upon the errors which are in vogue, or upon the controverſies which divide Chriſtians; but they have omitted many things which ſeem eſſential; no doubt,

doubt, because they did not intend to treat this subject purposely, or because they did not take a view of the whole extent of it.

As these considerations have made me wish for a long while that among so many able men who write about religion, some might undertake so important a subject; so they have determined me to publish these Essays upon the Causes of Corruption; hoping that others will apply themselves to the full discussion of those matters, which are here but imperfectly hinted at.

But that the scope of this Treatise may be the better understood; and that no body may expect that in it, which according to the scheme I formed to myself, ought not to have a place here; I shall acquaint the Reader with one thing, which he may perhaps have foreseen, from what has been already said.

I do not propose to myself to handle this matter in the way of the divinity schools. No man therefore ought to wonder, if I say nothing of the state in which all men are born; nor of that inclination to vice which is observed in them. For tho' this is the first original of corruption; yet certainly this corruption would be much less, if Christians did use the means which God affords them, to overcome it; and if there were not other sources which feed and strengthen that vitious propensity. Besides, I do not consider corruption in general, as it is common to all mankind, but I enquire into the Causes of the Corruption of *Christians* in particular. Neither do I design to write a moral treatise; so that it must not be expected, that I should discourse of self-love and pride, and of all the other passions, which are the ordinary occasions of men's sins; or that I should trace out all the particular causes of every sin. This would carry me too far; and such things have been often examined. I therefore apply myself only to the *general Causes*; and I manage the matter thus.

I divide this Work into two parts, because the Causes of Corruption may be of two sorts. I shall call those of the first sort, particular or internal; because they are within us, and to be found in every particular man that lives ill. Those of the second sort, which are more general, I name external, because they proceed rather from certain outward circumstances, and from the unhappiness of the times; than from the fault of particular persons.

The *Causes* I shall treat of in the *First Part*, are no other, but the ill dispositions in which most Christians are, and which hinder their applying themselves to piety: and of these I shall observe nine.

I. *Ignorance.*
II. *Prejudices and false Notions concerning Religion.*
III. *Some Opinions and Maxims which are used to authorize Corruption.*
IV. *The Abuse of Holy Scripture.*
V. *A false Modesty.*
VI. *The delaying Repentance.*
VII. *Man's Sloth and Negligence in Matters of Religion.*
VIII. *Worldly Business.*
IX. *Men's particular Callings.*

The *Causes* to be considered in the *Second Part* are these seven.

I. *The State of the Church and of Religion in general.*
II. *The Want of Discipline.*
III. *The Defects of the Clergy.*
IV. *The Defects of Christian Princes and Magistrates.*
V. *Education.*
VI. *Example and Custom.*
VII. *Books.*

I declare here that in diſcourſing upon theſe ſources, I do not mean to tax all Chriſtians without exception: ſo when I ſpeak of ignorance, and of prejudice commonly received; knowing and learned men are excepted: and when I obſerve certain defects in the ſtate of the church and of religion, in diſcipline, in clergy-men, or in Chriſtian magiſtrates; I ſuppoſe thoſe faults obtain more in ſome places than in others. In ſhort, whoever ſhould apply what is ſaid in this Treatiſe, to all ſorts of perſons and churches, would certainly miſtake my deſign.

And now I muſt deſire thoſe who may chance to ſee this Book, to examine ſeriouſly what I propoſe in it. No lover of truth or religion, can refuſe his attention to a ſubject of this nature. But I hope it will be more particularly welcome to church-men and divines; who are called by their function, to ſet themſelves againſt corruption, and to endeavour all they can to promote piety and the glory of God.

To conclude; I heartily implore his bleſſing upon this Work, who put it into my head to ſet about it, and who is my witneſs with what deſign and intention I publiſh it.

PART I.

CAUSE I.

Ignorance.

WHEN a man thinks of the Cauſes of that Corruption which over-runs the Chriſtian world; the firſt which offers itſelf to his mind, is Ignorance, and therefore I ſhall begin with that.

Our notions and knowledge, are the firſt principles of our actions. We can never love a thing, or adhere to it, when it is not at all, or when it is but imperfectly known to us: ſuppoſing then that men are ignorant, or very little inſtructed in religion, there is no wonder that they ſhould be corrupt: for they muſt of neceſſity be ſo. On the other hand, when they appear to be extremely corrupt, we may conclude, that they want inſtruction. I do not deny, but that corruption proceeds ſometimes from the wickedneſs of the heart, which reſiſts the light of the underſtanding; and that men frequently act againſt their knowledge. But it may ſafely be ſaid, That if Chriſtians were well inſtructed, they would not be ſo corrupt, and that wherever an extraordinary corruption is viſible, there is likewiſe a great deal of ignorance.

This is confirm'd by the Scripture, and by God's conduct in the eſtabliſhing the Chriſtian religion. When the Apoſtles ſpeak of thoſe diſorders,

orders, wherein the Heathens lived before their converſion, they aſcribe them to the darkneſs of their minds. * *The Gentiles* (ſays St. *Paul*) *have their underſtanding darkned, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart.* The ſame Apoſtle calls the times which preceded the coming of Chriſt, *the times of Ignorance.* And the firſt thing which God did to change the face of the world, and to reſcue it from Corruption; was to diſpel the clouds of their ignorance, and to enlighten them with the knowledge of himſelf, by the preaching of the Goſpel.

Although Chriſtians cannot be charged with ſo groſs an Ignorance as that of the Heathens; yet they fall very ſhort of that knowledge they ought to have, and it muſt be confeſſed, that for the moſt part, they live in ſhameful and deplorable Ignorance. This is the reaſon why piety is ſo much wanting among them, and why they are ſo depraved and vicious; which is the thing I will endeavour to make appear.

In order to this; as the Chriſtian religion may be reduced to theſe two heads,

Firſt, The Knowledge of the Truth.

Secondly, The Practice of Holineſs.

It is fit to enquire, Whether with reſpect to theſe, Chriſtians are furniſhed with neceſſary information? I ſhall make it appear that they are very little inſtructed.

I. In that which concerns the truths of religion. And

II. In what relates to manners, and to the duties of Chriſtianity.

The reflections I ſhall beſtow upon both theſe heads; will I hope, clearly prove, That among thoſe vaſt multitudes of men, who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, there are very few, who are well acquainted with their religion. From whence it will be natural to conclude, That they muſt needs be very corrupt.

I. To begin with the Knowledge of the Truths of Chriſtianity; we muſt diſtinguiſh two ſorts of truths in religion: the general, and the particular truths. The General Truths, are thoſe, upon which the whole of religion is founded; ſuch as theſe, That there is a God, That the Bible is a divine book, and That the Chriſtian religion is true. By Particular Truths, I mean the various doctrines which religion contains, and which are the parts of it; but which at the ſame time, depend upon the General Truths, as upon their principle. The doctrine of the ſacraments, of juſtification, and many others, are of this number. Now let us conſider the Ignorance of Chriſtians in reference to theſe two ſorts of truths:

1. Every man who makes uſe of his reaſon, may eaſily apprehend, That the General Truths are the moſt important; that they are thoſe of which one ought chiefly to be perſuaded; and that without theſe General Truths, the Particular ones would be uſeleſs, nay, would not be ſo much as Truths. To enquire, Whether there be any ſacraments, or how a man can be juſtified; one muſt believe firſt, That there is a God and a religion: for if I am not convinc'd of the exiſtence of God, and of the truth of religion, it would ſignifie little to me, whether or not there

* Eph. iv. 18.

there were any ſacraments, and all the time I ſhould employ in the proſecution of this enquiry would be loſt.

This firſt reflection does already diſcover to us an eſſential and capital defect. A great many Chriſtians want inſtruction concerning the principles and foundations of Chriſtianity; they do not ſufficiently conſider the certainty and importance of it. Their knowledge of religion, does ſeldom go further than the particular truths of it, and does not reach the general. This is ſo common a fault, that it may be obſerved even in thoſe whoſe profeſſion it is to ſtudy religion and to teach it to others. Some have ſpent the beſt part of their lives in the ſtudy of divinity, or in expounding the Scripture, who never ſeriouſly examined the arguments for the truth of Chriſtianity, or the divinity of the Scripture. Some are maſters of the principal controverſies which divide Chriſtians, who would ſtand mute if they were called back to the firſt elements of religion, and if they were to maintain againſt an Infidel, that there is a religion, or that the Chriſtian religion is true. The people enter yet leſs than the divines into the examination of the general truths; and there are very few who either attend to them, or indeed believe them as they ought.

And yet the whole of religion depends upon a firm perſuaſion concerning the principles of faith; it is that which renders the particular truths effectual to ſalvation, and which begets piety and the love of virtue. When a man is perſuaded that religion propoſes nothing but what is certain, he immediately receives with reverence whatſoever it teaches; he feels an inclination in himſelf to obſerve its precepts, and he believes a judgment and another life, as if he ſaw them before his eyes. Such is the efficacy of a true faith, and of a ſteady perſuaſion about fundamental truths. But without this perſuaſion it is very hard, not to ſay impoſſible, to adhere ſincerely to religion, and to perform the duties of it. And this is the conſtant ſource of the Corruption of Chriſtians.

It may perhaps be objected, that all Chriſtians receive the general truths of their Creeds, and that theſe are not queſtioned but by Pagans and Atheiſts. Upon which I ſhall make two reflections.

1. It is but too true, that in the point of religion, there is at this day a great number of perſons who entertain very looſe opinions, and that do at leaſt border upon Atheiſm. Theſe pernicious tenets are ſpread wider than ſome people think. Not only the Libertines are infected with them, but even the common people. All the prophane men and Deiſts are not to be found at courts, in armies, or among the learned; there are ſome in towns, among the vulgar, and even among country clowns. If we examine a little the diſcourſes and apprehenſions of men, eſpecially of thoſe whoſe life is irregular, if we do but begin to reaſon with them and preſs them, we may ſoon perceive the principles of incredulity and Atheiſm in many of them. It will be found that they are not thoroughly perſuaded that there is a God, and another life; or that if they do not proceed to that degree of impiety which attacks directly the very foundations of religion, they harbour at leaſt this fancy, that God doth not narrowly obſerve men's deportment; that he will not be ſo ſevere as to damn them for ſome ſins they have committed, and that there is no ſuch great harm in gratifying one's paſſions, and living at the uſual rate of the world.

Theſe

Theſe and the like ſentiments are general enough, and yet they lead the ſtraight way to Deiſm, and tend plainly to the ſubverſion of religion. It would be therefore highly neceſſary, in order to root out ſuch dangerous errours, careſully to eſtabliſh theſe great truths; That there is a God, that this God ſpeaks to us in his word, and that whatever the Goſpel tells us of another life, is moſt certain. This I ſay would be altogether needful, if it were but for the inſtruction of thoſe I have now mentioned, and their number is greater than is commonly imagined.

2*ly*, We may take notice, that tho' Chriſtians profeſs to believe the truths of their religion, yet that belief is not lively and ſtrong enough in them all. It is beyond all queſtion, that moſt Chriſtians are ſo only becauſe they were engaged by their birth in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity; but that after all, they know very little of the truth and divinity of it. They would in like manner have been Jews or Pagans, if they had been born in Judaiſm or Paganiſm; ſo that properly ſpeaking they cannot be ſaid to have faith; for faith is a perſuaſion; to believe, is to be perſuaded; and 'tis impoſſible to believe a thing right without reaſon or examination. That which is called faith is commonly nothing elſe but a confuſed and general opinion, which makes but very ſlight impreſſions upon the heart and mind; but true faith is a greater rarity among Chriſtians, than we are aware of. Now as faith is the only principle of piety, ſo a bad life does chiefly ſpring from want of faith and from incredulity. And there are two ſorts of Infidels; ſome deny and reject Divine truths; others do not quite deny them, but they doubt and believe but weakly. The Infidels who deny the fundamentals of religion, are not many, but the number of thoſe who doubt, and are not well perſuaded, is very great.

This diſcovers to us the reaſon why men who are acquainted with the Divine truths and profeſs to believe them, do yet act quite contrary to the dictates of faith and religion. There ſeems to be in their proceeding a manifeſt contradiction: it is a thing wondered at; that people who believe a God, and a religion, ſhould live as if there was neither God nor religion; upon this we are apt to ſay, that ſinners are not conſiſtent with themſelves; and as if it were impoſſible to reconcile their practice with their belief, we cry out, that the depth of man's heart is unſearchable. But there is no ſuch wonder in the caſe, and the proceeding of bad Chriſtians, is not always ſo contradictory, as it ſeems to be. I confeſs that men ſin ſometimes againſt the convictions of their own conſciences, and that ſome who want not knowledge, do yet live very ill.

This may proceed from inconſideration, from the violence of their paſſions, from too great a regard to their temporal intereſt, from the flattering hope of pardon, or ſome ſuch principle. But for the moſt part, men act conſonantly and ſuitably to their belief, and it is but ſeldom, that in the conduct of their lives, they behave themſelves contrary to the ſentiments and principles that poſſeſs them. We ſuppoſe that bad Chriſtians believe the truths of religion, and in that we are miſtaken. Many of them want faith, and are not fully convinced of thoſe truths. Is it to be imagined, that ſo many perſons who live in ſin, who make conſcience of nothing, and who violate every minute the rules of their du-

ty; ſhould be thoroughly perſuaded, that there is a God who ſees them, and to whom they are to give an account? From all this, I conclude, That the Ignorance of the General Truths of religion, is one of the principal ſources of Corruption.

Some will ſay, That theſe truths need not be proved, and that they are of the number of thoſe firſt principles, which are taken for granted, becauſe they are imprinted on the hearts of all men. But this objection is eaſily anſwered by what has been ſaid juſt now. I own that the ideas and principles of religion, carry in them a natural evidence, inaſmuch as they are demonſtrable from reaſon and conſcience; and becauſe there are principles in men by the help of which, they may arrive at the knowledge of the truths of religion. But theſe principles and ideas have been in ſome meaſure ſtifled in many, either thro' ill education, or worldly buſineſs, or vice, or ſome other cauſe; ſo that they feel the force and evidence of them but imperfectly; and ſome have no ſenſe at all of them.

Upon this account it is neceſſary to excite and enlighten thoſe ideas, to explain and eſtabliſh thoſe principles. I acknowledge further, That ſome parts of thoſe proofs upon which religion is built, lie open to all men's eyes; but yet the ignorant, and thoſe who are taken up with other objects, do not obſerve them: they ſhould therefore be made to attend to them: juſt as we make ſtupid and heedleſs people take notice of the beauty of a palace, or the ſkill of an artiſt in ſome curious workmanſhip, which would otherwiſe paſs unobſerved by them. However the opinion of thoſe who pretend that the General Truths ought not to be proved, is contrary to the Holy Scripture; which teaches us to reaſon upon the principles of religion, and to ſearch into the proofs of them; where in order to convince men that there is an Almighty and Infinitely good God, it propoſes to them, the beauties and wonders which ſhine in his works, and exhorts them to the conſideration of them. This may be ſeen in the book of *Job*. In the XIX. and CIV. *Pſal. Rom.* i. 19, 20. and in many other places.

3*ly*, It may further be ſaid, That the proof of General Truths, is too difficult for the common people, and that the learned only are capable of ſuch a diſcuſſion. I grant that all ſorts of perſons are not able to comprehend all that has been writ upon theſe matters. And therefore I do not pretend, that it is impoſſible to have a true faith without entring into the detail of all theſe proofs, and without following with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs, all the deep and abſtracted reaſonings, which have been uſed to prove the exiſtence of God, or the truth of the Chriſtian religion. I think rather thoſe matters ought to be treated with great diſcretion, eſpecially in ſermons. It would be a great piece of imprudence, to muſter up in a publick diſcourſe, all the objections of Atheiſts, or the ſubtilties of Libertines; theſe ought to be referred to private conferences. Thoſe who ſpeak to the people, muſt take heed, leſt by diſputing and ſpeculating too much, they render the fundamental truths problematical, and raiſe ſcruples in men's minds. They ought to build upon this principle, That men are carried by a common and natural inclination to believe the exiſtence of God, to acknowledge a difference betwixt good and evil, and to own Providence, and the other truths of religion; but for

all

all that, it may be very useful and necessary to confirm those truths, to set them in the clearest light, and to convince the people of them.

As to what is said, That the proofs of the principles of religion are not suitable to the people's capacity: I answer, That most of those proofs are such, that there is no need of being either learned, or a divine, to be affected with them. We ought to suppose here, that the more important any truth is, the clearer and the easier the proofs of it are. I do not speak of all truths; there are some that are most certain, whose proofs are difficult, and above the reach of common understandings; such are many metaphysical truths, and mathematical demonstrations; but at the same time, the knowledge of those truths is not necessary, and a man without danger may be ignorant of them. I speak now only of those truths which it concerns every person to know, and which are of general usefulness and necessity. These are always clear and easily proved. And this, by the by, ought on the one hand, to make us admire the wisdom and goodness of God, who has so well provided for the necessities of men; and on the other hand to set bounds to our curiosity, and to fortify our faith against those doubts, which might start up in our minds, by reason of so many things which we are ignorant of.

As therefore of all truths, none are of greater consequence, or of a more intire certainty than those, which religion depends upon; so the proof of those truths ought to be simple, evident and suited to all men's capacity. Thus when in order to prove the being of a God; we alledge, for instance, the state and order in which the world subsists; when we shew that the world cannot be eternal, and that things had a beginning; when we establish the inspiration of Scripture by the prophecies it contains, which were undoubtedly written before their accomplishment: when we prove the truth of the Christian religion by the truth of matters of fact and history, and demonstrate that if the facts upon which religion is founded, are not certain, there is no such thing as certainty in the world, in respect of things that are past; and that if the testimony of the Apostles is rejected, there are no witnesses or historians, who may not be rejected upon better grounds: when we confirm the Sacred History, by the concurring testimony of Pagan writers, and by the most ancient, and the most unquestionable monuments, which past ages can afford: when we reflect upon the manner in which the Christian religion was planted in the world, and upon the alteration it has made in it: when we insist upon the characters of truth, sincerity and divinity, which are observable in the Scripture: in short, when we take religion to pieces, and make men see and feel, that its doctrines, its precepts, its promises, and its threatnings, have nothing in them that is absurd or bad, or contrary to our natural apprehensions; nothing but what perfectly agrees with sound reason, and the sentiments of our own consciences; and nothing but what is advantageous to particular persons, and to societies: When I say, we urge these proofs and others like them, and have the art of propoling them in a clear and judicious method, it is certain that they contain nothing that is very difficult. These are the clearest and the strongest proofs that can be used, in a subject of this nature; and the arguments which are made use of to establish these proofs, are for the most part so natural, and so conform to the ideas of our minds, and to the

principles

principles of common sense, that there are few even of the vulgar who may not apprehend them; if not perfectly and in their whole extent, which is reserved to men of a larger capacity; yet so far at least as to be sufficiently sensible of their force.

If then difficulties and obscurities are to be met with in the discussion of the principles of religion; it is because this matter is neglected, and the people are little informed. But if the same care had been taken to instruct Christians in the fundamental truths of religion, which was bestowed upon explaining and clearing particular ones; they would have another kind of persuasion than they have of the truth of religion. These great and sublime truths, have without comparison more suitableness and affinity with the nature of men and the sentiments of their hearts, than many obscure, difficult and less necessary things, which yet have been effectually taught them.

4*ly*, But against this, experience may possibly be objected: it may be said, That there are Christians, who most certainly have piety, and yet did never meditate much upon the foundations of Christianity. I answer, That it is not conceivable, how a man should be a pious Christian, without being persuaded of the truth of his religion. For at this rate piety would be but meer conceit and enthusiasm; and we must say notwithstanding all that Scripture and reason tells us to the contrary, that men are Christians without knowledge or reason. It cannot be otherwise, but that good men must have been convinced of the truths of the Gospel, and have had a lively sense, that these are the most certain and the most important of all truths. If we enquire what principle it is which produces piety in the hearts of the most simple people, we shall find it is an unmoveable persuasion, That there is a God, a judgment, a heaven and a hell; which persuasion is necessarily founded upon some of the proofs I have hinted at.

I grant, which no doubt will be objected to me, That in many this persuasion is not clear enough, and that it is not the result of a particular examination; but this does not lessen the force of my argument. For though the persuasion of good men should not be so clear and so well grounded as it might be, yet it does not follow but that it is sincere; a man may be convinced of a truth, tho' he does not discover all the certainty and all the proofs of it, and tho' he is not able to answer all the objections against it. So that still it is true, that there is no religion, without the belief of the general truths of it. After all, we must acknowledge, That there are good men, who are not so well instructed upon this head as it were to be wished. And this defect of instruction, this imperfection of their faith, is one of the main causes of the defect and imperfection of their piety. Thus we may frequently observe, in their conduct, such weaknesses and opinions as do not agree with the pure light of faith, and with the exactness of the rules of the Gospel. This is part of the unhappiness we lament, and of that Corruption of which we seek the Causes. But no man will dispute, but that if the same persons had more instruction, they would carry virtue much farther than they do. The degree of piety, does ordinarily follow the degree of faith: where there is no faith, there is no piety; and where faith is weak and faint, piety is languid and defective. This is the general state and character

character of Chriſtians at this time; either downright impiety, or a piety that is both feeble and imperfect.

5*thly*, In the laſt place, ſome will perhaps object here, That incredulity is the effect, rather than the cauſe of corruption; and that Atheiſm does not produce corruption, but corruption Atheiſm. To this, I ſay, that theſe two things do mutually uphold and ſupport each other. Many fall into Infidelity, becauſe their hearts are vitiated, their licentious way of living takes them off from enquiring into religion, and hinders their believing of Divine truths. But it is not leſs certain that one of the great cauſes of the diſorders of Chriſtians, is that either they do not believe at all, or that they believe weakly and confuſedly; and this cannot be reaſonably conteſted.

II. Here is then the firſt and the principal defect, That men are not ſufficiently inſtructed in the general truths and principles of Chriſtianity. I ſaid that the particular truths and the parts of religion were better known; which does not imply but that in this reſpect too, Ignorance is very great and general.

1. I ſhall not ſcruple to ſay, That there are prodigious numbers of people, who ſcarce have any knowledge at all of the doctrines of religion. If all Chriſtians were obliged to render an account of their faith, if they were examined upon the articles of their belief, or the main facts related in Sacred Hiſtory; there would appear in moſt of them, ſuch an aſtoniſhing Ignorance, or ſuch confuſed and intricate ideas; that one would hardly think them more knowing than if they lived in the darkneſs of Heatheniſm. And what religion, what piety can we look for among ſuch men?

But beſides this groſs and palpable Ignorance, there are ſeveral defects of inſtruction to be obſerved, even in thoſe who have, or fancy that they have more knowledge than others. I ſhall particularly take notice of theſe two.

1*ſt*, Thoſe who exceed the ordinary degree of knowledge, have yet often but a falſe kind of light: either they do not know thoſe truths which they ſhould know, or elſe they know them not right. They apply themſelves to things which are not eſſential to Chriſtianity, or which are leſs conſiderable than others which they do not ſtudy. Thus in all Chriſtian ſocieties, inſtruction is commonly placed in the knowledge of the doctrines and opinions, particular to every one's own ſect and party. Whoever is able to debate thoſe points, and is ſkilled in controverſie, is ſaid to underſtand his religion. Theſe matters may perhaps have their uſe; but there are other things which men are more concerned to know, becauſe they are more conducing to piety; and yet they are almoſt conſtantly neglected. The occaſion of this error, is that the various importance of the truths of religion, is not duly weighed, and that religion is not ſtudied in an orderly method. Very few perſons diſtinguiſh between the more and the leſs neceſſary things, between the moſt uſeful ſubjects and thoſe which are of little edification. Moſt men ſtudy religion without rule, and to no purpoſe, and ſo run out upon many unprofitable ſubjects. That which is called learning in divinity or knowledge of religion, is frequently nothing elſe, but a heap of notions, which have no influence upon piety, or reſpect to men's ſalvation. It is but a confuſed

confused medley, wherein the least necessary things are blended, without choice and distinction, with the most important. I do not speak here of the perplext and unaccurate ideas which men often have about these matters; I pass by the false reasonings, which are sometimes used to establish the truths of Christianity, as well as those mists, which the school-divinity has cast upon the Gospel: I do only observe, That the knowledge which most men have of religion, is not very fit to make them sensible of the beauties of it; so that when all is done, it is no wonder that it should seem to many an obscure, crabbed, unpleasant and intricate science, and that it should have so little effect upon men's minds.

2*dly*, The other fault is, That men content themselves with bare instruction, or with the simple knowledge of the Christian truths, while they are ignorant of their use. If they do but know in an historical manner, what is believed by Christians, and are able to reason about it, and to discern truth from error, they think themselves sufficiently instructed. But these instructions do not reach the heart. Among that small number of persons who have some knowledge, there are but few who consider that this knowledge is to be directed to a holy life, as to its proper end and intendment; and they are fewer yet who actually direct it to that end, and make it subservient to the reforming of their lives. And so it comes to pass, that a great many of those who are best acquainted with the truths of religion, have yet but an imperfect and barren knowledge of it, and that with all their attainments, they live still in the darkness of corruption and vice.

II. Hitherto we have considered Ignorance with relation to the truths and doctrines, which the Christian faith embraces: let us now view this Ignorance with respect to the duties which Christianity prescribes. Upon this second head we shall discover yet a greater Ignorance than upon the first. For after all, something may be done, when we are only to infuse into men some knowledge of truths and doctrines. It is usual enough to see very ill men, who in this regard are not destitute of light. But it is much harder to instruct them in the duties of holiness. We may apply here these words of our Saviour's; * *Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; for every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.* The maxims of the Gospel and the rules of its morality condemn sinners, and therefore they do not care to be informed about them. Those who love the world and their sins, are glad if they can enjoy the sweets of these without disturbance and interruption: and therefore they will not enquire much into the moral precepts of Jesus Christ; they are loth to come at such a knowledge as would disclose to them the turpitude of vice, and breed disquiet and remorse in them. Ignorance begets security: the more ignorant a man is, the fewer stings he feels in his conscience, the more pleasure he takes in his sin. The very shadow of evil frights a well-instructed Christian; but crime itself does not daunt one who is ignorant: he does not hear within himself those alarms or reproaches, which are either the preservatives against sin, or the remedies of it.

From this it may be judged already, that men are generally very little

* John iii. 19, 20.

instructed in what concerns manners. But that we may the better understand how great the ignorance is in this matter, it must be observed, That whoever will perform the duties of religion, must be persuaded of their necessity, and acquainted with their nature. One cannot imagine how they can be practised by a man, who either does not know them, or does not think them necessary: this is the plain reason why men do so little addict themselves to piety; they know neither its necessity nor its nature.

1. As the foundation of faith is the belief of the truth and certainty of those facts and doctrines which religion proposes; so the ground-work of piety is, to be persuaded of the necessity of the duties which Christianity requires: without this persuasion, it is impossible for men to resign up themselves to the practice of virtue. Now one would think that all Christians should be fully convinced of this necessity. For if there is any certain truth in Christianity, it is this, that the practice of good works is necessary. Good works do so immediately belong to the design and the essence of religion, that it falls to the ground as soon as they are taken away: and in proportion as the necessity of a good life is weakened, so much is the power and beauty of that holy religion which Christ brought into the world lessened. Religion contains doctrines, precepts, promises and threatnings. It does altogether depend upon the existence of a God, and the certainty of another life, and a judgment to come. But if you banish out of religion the absolute necessity of good works, you attack it in all its parts, and you undermine its very foundations. For this makes the knowledge of its doctrines vain and needless; it turns its precepts into bare counsels; the promises of it, which are conditional, and suppose obedience, cease to be promises; the threats which God denounces against sinners, are but empty menaces, which God makes only to fright men, but does not intend to execute. This destroys the chiefest and strongest proofs of the existence of a God, and of another life; it ruins that great argument for religion, which is drawn from the difference between virtue and vice, and from the desert of both; and it contradicts the necessity, the nature and justice of the last judgment. All this may easily be demonstrated. This necessity of good works might likewise be proved, from the plain declarations of the word of God; and it might be shewn, that there is no truth more clearly and frequently inculcated than this in Holy Writ. But not to engage in these particulars, which do not properly belong to my purpose; I shall take it for granted, that a holy life is absolutely necessary; for either that is true, or there is nothing true in religion.

Yet how clear soever this truth may be, it is but little known, and men are not much persuaded of it. No man indeed, does flatly and without some preamble deny the necessity of holiness; every teacher professes that to be his doctrine; all Christians, in shew at least, are agreed about it. But when they come to explain their meaning clearly concerning this necessity; when it comes to the application or to practice, or when they establish other doctrines, they contradict themselves, they hesitate upon the matter, or they explain it with certain restrictions, which sooth men in security, and dispose them to believe that salvation may be obtained without good works; which overthrows their necessity.

Nay,

Nay, ſome frame to themſelves ſuch a notion of religion as even excludes good works; this will appear in the following chapters.

If it be ſaid, That though this intire and indiſpenſable neceſſity of a good life were not ſuppoſed, yet this would not preſently open a door to licentiouſneſs, ſince there remain other ſufficient motives to holineſs, ſuch as thoſe which are derived from the juſtice and reaſonableneſs of the divine laws, from the gratitude and love we owe to God, from the edification of our neighbour, and from our calling and duty, I anſwer, that theſe motives are very juſt and preſſing, and that they neceſſarily enter into that obedience, which all true Chriſtians pay to the commandments of God. I acknowledge beſides, that they would be ſufficient to inſpire all men with the love of virtue, if they did all govern themſelves by the principles of right reaſon and juſtice. But theſe are not the only motives which ought to be urged; God propoſes others beſides; he promiſes, he threatens, he declares, * *that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee his face*, which imports an abſolute neceſſity. And ſurely as men generally are, there are many of them upon whom thoſe motives taken from decency, juſtice, gratitude, duty, or the edification of our neighbours, will have very little force. The moſt honourable motives are not always the moſt effectual. Man being ſo corrupt, is ſo many ways, and by ſo ſtrong a bias carried towards evil, that it is hard for him, without an abſolute neceſſity, to abſtain from it. But how much leſs will he refrain from ſin; if he is perſuaded that it is not neceſſary to controul his inclinations, and to confine himſelf to a kind of life, which appears unpleaſant and melancholy to him? Now as this is the diſpoſition in which moſt people are, we need no longer wonder, why there is ſo little religion and piety among men.

2. If it is difficult to practiſe thoſe duties, which we do not think neceſſary, eſpecially when they croſs our inclinations; it is yet harder to practiſe them, when we do not know them. It is not poſſible to do good or to avoid evil, if we do not know the good that we ſhould do, and the evil we ought to ſhun. Now in this the generality of Chriſtians want inſtruction. Every body ſpeaks of piety and virtue, but few men know what they are. The common people are little acquainted with the duties of religion or the rules of chriſtian morals. This muſt be confeſt, and the glory of God requires, that we ſhould ingenuouſly own it. I cannot but enter here into ſome particulars, to prove this ignorance.

1. There are ſome eſſential duties unknown to a great number of Chriſtians, and which were never thought of by an infinity of men. I will alledge for an inſtance one of the plaineſt and of the moſt neceſſary duties of morality, and that is reſtitution. Tho' the ſcripture ſhould not expreſly enjoyn it, we need but conſult reaſon and natural juſtice to be convinced, that he who has done an injury to another man by taking from him any part of his property; is bound to make up that damage, by reſtoring to him whatever he has wronged him of. There is every day occaſion enough to make reſtitution; nothing being more common, than for one man to appropriate to himſelf by unlawful means, what belongs to another; and yet in many places reſtitution is a thing without preſident.

* Heb. xii. 14.

precedent. But this we ought not to wonder at, conſidering that there are thouſands of Chriſtians who never heard a word of this duty. This matter is ſo little known, and the people are ſo little inſtructed about it; that a treatiſe concerning reſtitution, written by Mr. *la Placette*, having been publiſhed ſome years ſince; it has been read as a very ſingular book, the ſubject whereof was new and curious. Nay, ſome have gone ſo far as to cenſure this doctrine of reſtitution, pretending that it was novel and too ſevere; ſuch a pitch of ignorance are men arrived at in matters of morality. And this is not the only duty which is not underſtood; there are many others beſides, either among thoſe which are common to all men, or among thoſe which are particular to every calling, and which it does not appear that men were ever taught or ever made the leaſt reflection upon. Now a man muſt needs neglect the duties that he does not know.

2. There are divers ſins, which are not commonly ranked among ſins, or which men do not think to be damning ſins. Of this number is lying and unſincerity, either in diſcourſe or in dealings. Among theſe we may alſo reckon luxury, ſloth, a ſoft and voluptuous life; many indirect practices to grow rich, which are eſtabliſhed and authorized by cuſtom; drunkenneſs, which in ſome countries is not eſteemed a vice, and all thoſe ſins which are only committed by our thoughts. Chriſtians now a-days think themſelves innocent, ſo they do not do things manifeſtly criminal. They conceive that murther is a crime, but they do not think themſelves guilty for paſſing a raſh judgment upon their neighbours, or taking up unjuſt ſuſpicions of them. They believe uncleanneſs to be a ſin, though even ſome are very indulgent to themſelves upon this head; but impure thoughts or ſenſuality go for nothing with them. Thus there are many ſins which men are not inſtructed about, and what wonder is it then, if they commit them without ſcruple, and if there is ſo much corruption in their manners.

3. There are ſome general maxims in morality without the knowledge of which, it is impoſſible to have a ſolid piety; and yet theſe are almoſt univerſally unknown; eſpecially theſe two, which deſcribe to us the characters of true holineſs. The firſt is, That a habit of ſin is an infallible token of a corrupt man; and that any one habitual ſin which a man does not forſake, eſpecially when he is warned of it, is enough to ſhut him out of heaven. This maxim is underſtood but by very few people. Moſt men are ingaged in vitious habits; ſuch as praying without attention, ſwearing, falling into a paſſion, or the like: Theſe habits grow ſtronger with age, men live and die in them, and yet they think, they die in a ſtate of ſalvation. The other maxim which is neither leſs important nor better known; is, That there is a vaſt difference, between ſin and ſin, and between ſinners and ſinners; that the frailties of good men are one thing, and the great and wilful ſins of bad men, another thing. If men do not apprehend this difference, they will confound virtue with vice, and good men with impious wretches; and yet this is little obſerved. It is commonly believed that all men being ſinners, they are all upon the matter in the ſame condition, and do all ſin alike, ſo that there is no great odds between them. Such notions muſt needs make way for libertiniſm.

4ly, If Chriſtians have ſome knowledge concerning the duties of morality; yet that knowledge is too general and ſuperficial. They know perhaps in the main, that ſome ſins are to be avoided, and ſome virtues to be practiſed; but that they only know confuſedly, they content themſelves with ſome general ideas, which for the moſt part prove uſeleſs and inſignificant. The deſign of morality, is to regulate men's actions, in all the circumſtances they may be in, and to teach them how they ought to behave themſelves, in all the different caſes and emergencies of life. Now as theſe caſes and circumſtances are infinitely various, it is neceſſary that men ſhould know their duty with ſome exactneſs, and that they ſhould have rules at hand applicable to all particular caſes, by the help of which they may diſcern, what is lawful from what is not. For here ſuperficial knowledge and general ideas, will not ſerve the turn; becauſe they do not determine particular caſes.

The principles of morality are clear, but it is requiſite to make a juſt application of them, and to draw right conſequences from them. Every body acknowledges, that wrong is not to be done to any man, but few know what the doing of wrong is. There are innumerable ways of violating juſtice in relation to our neighbours, or of getting money, which are ſinful; and yet theſe are made uſe of every day, and people think that there is no harm in them; and ſo they are guilty of cheating, extortion and injuſtice, and they do not know it. Whence does this proceed, but from ignorance, or from thoſe general and ſuperficial notions which I have mentioned? This is one of the reaſons why ſome books and diſcourſes of piety produce ſo little effect; they handle things only in the lump; they treat of virtues and vices, of temperance, of covetouſneſs and injuſtice; they exhort and threaten; but they uſually go no further than generalities, and they ſeldom deſcend to thoſe particulars, which are ſo neceſſary to inform and direct the conſcience.

5ly, Men are no leſs ignorant concerning the degrees, than they are concerning the parts of holineſs. Chriſtians are not only obliged to the practice of many virtues; but they ought beſides that to practiſe them in the moſt perfect manner. Our Saviour does not require in his diſciples a mean and ordinary degree of holineſs; but he calls them to perfection. He demands that they ſhould carry virtue much farther, than either the heathens or the Jews did, that they ſhould practiſe charity, even to the loving of their enemies; that they ſhould be ſo patient, as to think it their happineſs to ſuffer; ſo humble as chearfully to bear contempt and injuſtice; ſo pure, as to baniſh all uncleanneſs from their very thoughts; and ſo of all the other virtues. But an infinite number of Chriſtians, are ſtrangers to theſe ideas of perfection. They never knew the extent of the duties of Chriſtianity; they have neither tenderneſs of conſcience, nor elevated ſentiments about morality. They think they do much, if they obſerve that which is moſt ſimple and eaſy in every virtue; they confine themſelves to that, and aim at no other perfection; ſo that ſublime virtue and piety are not to be ſought for amongſt them.

6ly, Laſtly men's ignorance does not only appear in that they do not know their duty; but it does likewiſe diſcover itſelf in this, that they do not know themſelves. The knowledge of one's ſelf is a capital point in religion. For it is not enough to be informed of one's duty; every one

one muſt know beſides, whether he obſerves it or not, whether he really has religion and piety; for upon this depends the judgment he is to make of himſelf, and of his own condition: now people are as much in the dark about this article, as about the others I have mentioned. The greateſt part of men live without reflecting upon themſelves, and in a prodigious unconcernedneſs about their ſpiritual ſtate. They do not trouble themſelves to inquire, whether they are of the number of good or bad men, whether they are in a ſtate of grace, or of damnation or not. Or, if at any time they take this into conſideration, they moſt commonly flatter themſelves, by pronouncing too favourable a judgment upon their own condition. There are many who boldly rank themſelves among good men; and yet are not able to give a ſolid reaſon of that opinion they have conceived of their own probity and virtue; nay they are perhaps actually engaged in vice and impiety. If they are but free from noiſy and ſcandalous ſins, if they feel now and then ſome good motions, if they have ſome good qualities, or an inclination to ſome virtues, or an abhorrence of ſome vices; that is enough to fill them with a good opinion of themſelves. Now when men are thus blinded by ſelf-love, and do not know themſelves; there is but little hope of them, and they will undoubtedly fall into a ſtate of ſecurity.

Theſe conſiderations plainly ſhew, if I am not miſtaken, that men for the moſt part live in very great ignorance. But I think my ſelf bound to anſwer an objection, which may be offered againſt what has been ſaid. Some will think no doubt, that it is very difficult for men, to be ſo well inſtructed as I ſuppoſe they ought to be; and that the people are not capable of ſuch an exact knowledge of morality.

To ſatisfie thoſe who make this objection, and to clear this matter fully: I obſerve firſt; that by all I have ſaid, I do by no means pretend, that all Chriſtians can, or ought to be equally inſtructed. I know that there are degrees of knowledge, and that in morality, as well as in doctrines, divines and men of parts, go a great way beyond the bulk of mankind. It is ſufficient for every one to be inſtructed, according to his capacity and his condition. But after all, it muſt be granted, that the knowledge of the principles of morality, is neceſſary to every body; or elſe we muſt ſtrike ſeveral precepts out of the Goſpel; unleſs that we imagine that thoſe precepts are intended only for a ſmall number of learned and ſubtil men; which is directly oppoſite to our Saviour's words, who ſaid, that his doctrine is deſigned for all mankind, for the *little ones* and the ſimple, rather than for * *the wiſe and prudent*. There is no Chriſtian but ought to be *a ſpiritual man and taught of God*. When St. *Paul* ſays, *prove all things, hold faſt that which is good. Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe think of theſe things.* When St. *Peter* exhorts Chriſtians, *to add to their faith all Chriſtian virtues, to grow and abound in all theſe virtues*; ſuch exhortations do belong equally to all the profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

It muſt not be ſaid, that there are men in the world of very dull and

* Matth. xi. 25. 1 Cor. x. John vi. 45. 1 Theſſ. v. 20. Phil. iv. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

ſhallow capacities, and that country people and mechanicks cannot comprehend all theſe maxims of morality. This is not ſo difficult as it is imagined. The duties of morality are clear, they preſently affect a man, becauſe they are conſonant, to the common notices and ſentiments of conſcience. Chuſe what part of morality you pleaſe, and you may with due endeavours, make either a handy-crafts-man, or a day-labourer apprehend it; ſo you confine your ſelf to the knowledge and practice of thoſe duties which are neceſſary to ſuch people in their ſeveral callings. Is there any thing more ſubtil or difficult in the rules of morality, than there is in a hundred dexterities and ſhifts, which are practiſed in the affairs of this life; and which common people can attain to without any great pains? If therefore men's underſtandings are ſo groſs and ſtupid in moral matters; it is not becauſe theſe matters are above their reach; but becauſe they were never taught them, or never applied themſelves to them. We ought not to judge of what men might be by what they are. The beſt ground becomes barren, when it is not cultivated. If things were well ordered among Chriſtians, in relation eſpecially to the inſtruction of the people, and the education of children; the generality of them would not be ſo ſtupid and ignorant as they are. We may therefore conclude, That ignorance is one of the general Cauſes of Corruption. Chriſtians being ill informed of the truths and duties of their religion; and wanting inſtruction both as to faith and manners, they muſt needs live in a great neglect of religious matters.

It may be aſked, Whence does this Ignorance proceed? I ſhall obſerve three principal Cauſes of it. The firſt is Education; the way in which children are bred up, does infallibly lead to ignorance. The ſecond is the want of means to get good inſtruction, and particularly the defect of thoſe inſtructions which are delivered to Chriſtians, in ſermons, catechiſms, and books. The third is the ſloth and careleſſneſs of men, who will be at no pains to acquire neceſſary knowledge We might beſtow very weighty conſiderations upon every one of theſe three heads; but ſince they will come again in our way, in the ſequel of this Treatiſe, it is enough to have pointed at them in this place, as the three main ſources of Ignorance. In truth, if men are ill educated, if they are deſtitute of the neceſſary means of inſtruction, and take no care about it; whence ſhould they have ſufficient knowledge? unleſs they were inſtructed by miracles, by revelations, and inſpirations, they cannot but be ignorant and corrupt.

But now if Ignorance be the firſt Cauſe of Corruption; it is plain that the firſt remedy to be uſed againſt Corruption, is the removing that Ignorance. It is that we are to begin at, if we would bring back Chriſtians, to a life worthy of the religion they profeſs. Exhortations, cenſures, and all other ſuch methods will ſignify nothing, as long as men's minds are not prepared by proper inſtructions.

From all that has been ſaid in this chapter, it may be gathered, That the right way to inſtruct men, is before all things to convince them of the truth of religion; and to make them ſenſible that there is nothing more certain, or of greater conſequence in the world, than the principles of Chriſtianity. The belief of the General Truths, ought eſpecially to be well fixed in their minds: as that there is a God, a Providence,

dence, a judgment and another life. After this we muſt proceed to the Particular Truths of the Goſpel, and as we go on in explaining them, we ought to ſhew, what influence thoſe truths have upon holineſs and ſalvation.

But the moſt important thing of all, when theſe truths are ſettled; is to ſhew, that the bare knowledge of the Chriſtian doctrines, is not able to make men happy; that the ſcope of religion, is to make men truly good; and that without piety and good works there is no ſalvation.

It will not be ſufficient to recommend ſanctification in general, but the nature of it muſt beſides be diſtinctly explained; it muſt be ſhewed which are the general and particular obligations of a Chriſtian life, and what ſins are contrary to theſe. And here thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is to inſtruct the people, ought to be as particular, as poſſibly they can; ſhewing upon each virtue and vice what the nature of it is, and what are the ſeveral characters, kinds, and degrees of it; and propoſing likewiſe the motives which ſhould diſcourage men from thoſe vices, and prompt them to the practice of the oppoſite virtues; as alſo the directions which may facilitate the performance of all theſe duties. When teachers ſhall go thus to work, they will ſoon perceive ſome amendment; God's bleſſing will accompany the uſe of thoſe means which he has appointed. Chriſtians being rightly informed, will of their own accord apply themſelves to virtue; Corruption will leſſen by degrees; and Chriſtianity recovering its ancient luſtre, will begin to appear with another face than it does at this day.

CAUSE II.

Prejudices and falſe Notions concerning Religion.

HOW ignorant and corrupt ſoever men may be, they cannot live abſolutely without religion; very few at leaſt can go ſo far. If they are hindered by their Corruption, to know and practiſe pure Chriſtianity; yet a remnant of light and conſcience within them, does not ſuffer them to run themſelves wholly into irreligion, and to lay aſide all thoughts of ſalvation. But to reconcile theſe two principles, of which one draws them off from religion, and the other leads them to it; they form to themſelves ſuch ideas of religion, as are agreeable to their inclinations, and flatter their ſecurity; and being poſſeſſed with thoſe ideas, they confirm themſelves more and more in their Corruption. Theſe falſe Notions and Prejudices are worſe than Ignorance, and prove a greater obſtacle to the reviving of virtue and piety. It is better to deal with men who are ſimply ignorant, than with people who have wrong apprehenſions, and are full of prejudices. The former being not prepoſſeſſed, may more eaſily be reclaimed; but it is much harder to prevail upon pre-ingaged perſons, eſpecially in point of religion; becauſe while they maintain their errors, they fancy they defend the truth, and that they

promote the glory of God. False Notions and Prejudices in Religion, are therefore one of those Causes of Corruption, which it concerns us most to take notice of. I shall endeavour to point at the chief of them in this chapter.

I. The first I shall name, is the opinion of those, who think that religion is intended only to comfort men, and to render them happy. And it is no wonder that men should commonly resolve all religion into this. The desire of happiness is natural to men; and as they are sensible, upon serious consideration, that perfect happiness is not to be obtained in this world, if it were for no other reason but that they must die; they seek in religion some consolation and remedy, against that fatal necessity, of quitting all the pleasures and advantages of this present life. Indeed the sense of their Corruption should restrain them from flattering themselves with the hopes of salvation; but they rely upon the assurances of the Divine Mercy, which religion gives to men; and they persuade themselves, that their sins will not obstruct their felicity This is properly the Notion which men entertain of Religion, and that which they think it is good for. But that religion should indispensably oblige men to fear God and to live well, and that without this, there is neither true religion, nor happiness; is that which is not commonly believed.

There is no question but that the design of religion is to comfort men, and to lead them to happiness. This was God's purpose in sending his Son to redeem the world. But this is not the only end of religion; it is intended besides for the glory of God and the sanctification of men; and it does properly consist in the service and obedience which are paid to God. Salvation is a consequence of this service, and a gratuitous reward, which God is pleased to bestow upon those, who honour and fear him. Nothing therefore is more absurd than the conceit of those, who look only upon that side of religion, which promises comfort and salvation: and nothing is more dangerous or more apt to make men remiss and careless in their duty; yet this imagination is very common, and if I was to define religion, by the ordinary apprehensions which men have of it, I would say; that it is nothing else, but a mean to bring sinners to heaven, and to make men eternally happy, whatsoever their course and manner of life may be.

II. But men would not so easily promise themselves salvation, if they had not very mean and imperfect ideas of religion. I shall therefore observe,

Secondly, That men commonly place Christianity, either in bare knowledge, or in an external profession, or in confidence. But holiness does not make a part of their Notion of Religion, or at best it makes but a very inconsiderable part of it.

It is not to be denied but that knowledge is essential to religion, and that as it holds the first rank in it, so it is the foundation of it all. Nay it is impossible to engage men to holiness, without laying first in them the foundation of good and sound doctrine. This I have proved in the first chapter of this Treatise. An outward and publick profession is likewise essential to religion, for one cannot be a Christian without it. And further, it is beyond all doubt, that religion inspires confidence, peace, and joy. The knowledge of Christ, and of the salvation he has procured

ed for us, muſt naturally produce theſe effects. Knowledge, profeſſion, and confidence, are therefore included in the idea of religion, but as neceſſary as they are, yet they are not ſufficient.

Knowledge is not the whole of religion, ſince the Goſpel as well as experience teaches us, that it may be found in the worſt of men; it is not therefore a ſaving knowledge but when it produces piety and charity. The definition which St. *Paul* gives of the Chriſtian religion, is that it is * *a knowledge of the truth according to godlineſs*. We may read what the Apoſtle tells us concerning that knowledge which is void of charity, 1 *Cor.* xiii. As for an outward profeſſion, it is altogether uſeleſs without ſanctity. A hypocrite may live in the church, and perform even with applauſe, the external duties of piety. This we may likewiſe learn from Scripture and daily experience. Laſtly, all confidence which is not ſupported by piety, is vain and deceitful. The bare perſuaſion that one ſhall be ſaved, gives no man a right to ſalvation. A very wicked perſon may without any ground rely upon God's mercy, and this is what divines call preſumption and ſecurity.

But tho' all this is very plain, both from Scripture and good ſenſe, yet men entertain opinions contrary to it. A great many think themſelves Chriſtians, becauſe they know the truths and doctrines of Chriſtianity. I do not enquire here, Whether all thoſe who think they know religion, do really know it? But howſoever this knowledge true or falſe, makes many judge moſt favourably of themſelves; it does ſo puff them up, that they look on themſelves as the ſtays and ſupporters of religion. Others, of whom there is an infinite number, imagine that ſo they profeſs the true religion, they need not fear any thing concerning their ſalvation; eſpecially if this outward profeſſion is attended with ſome apparent zeal, and ſome aſſiduity in the publick exerciſes of religion. Laſtly, it is believed by many, that God requires nothing elſe of men, but confidence, and that if they are in that diſpoſition they cannot come ſhort of ſalvation. They think that in order to ſalvation, it is enough to acknowledge that they are miſerable ſinners, and to truſt in the Divine mercy, and in the merits of Jeſus Chriſt.

This laſt Prejudice which reduces Religion to acts of confidence, is perhaps the commoneſt of all. And yet if we were to determine which of theſe three, *viz.* knowledge, profeſſion, and confidence, is the leaſt eſſential to religion; we muſt ſay, that it is confidence. It is a thing unconceivable and contradictory, that a man ſhould be a Chriſtian without knowing and without making publick profeſſion of his religion: but a man may be a Chriſtian and a good man too, and yet want confidence. For as it frequently happens that a bad man is animated with a falſe confidence; ſo a good man may have a timorous conſcience, and be poſſeſſed with groundleſs fears. Sometimes melancholy, or a want of knowledge, or of force of mind, or even conſtitution, may throw good men into a ſtate in which they feel no comfort. But without inſiſting upon this; it is viſibly an error as common as it is pernicious, for men to pretend, that knowledge, profeſſion, or confidence, are ſufficient to ſalvation, when they are ſeparated from the practice of holineſs.

It may perhaps be objected, that no man has theſe opinions, and that

* Tit. i. 1.

every body acknowledges, that religion obliges men to be holy. I grant that no man does expreſly exclude holineſs; it is confeſſed by all, that the practice of it is neceſſary. But yet I maintain, that it is looked upon as the leaſt neceſſary thing in religion. And to prove this; I need but alledge the difference which is made between knowledge, profeſſion, and confidence; and the practice of good works. The three firſt are generally preſſed and recommended in another manner than the laſt.

As to knowledge, it is not without reaſon repreſented as abſolutely neceſſary; it is ſaid, That a man muſt know and believe all the articles of the Chriſtian faith; and whoever denies any one of them, is excluded from ſalvation. This neceſſity is extended to many doctrines, which is not of the ſame importance with fundamental truths; many queſtions are determined, and all theſe deciſions are made articles of faith. If any one raiſes any doubt about them, he is treated as a Heretick, and people cry out as if religion was upon the brink of ruin. So that upon this head extreme ſeverity is uſed, every fault is capital, and no allowance is made for humane infirmity.

As to outward profeſſion; the neceſſity of it is openly maintained, and not without juſt cauſe. In this point man's duty, and the precepts of the Goſpel are rigorouſly preſſed. The leaſt diſſembling of a man's belief, the leaſt act of unlawful worſhip, is called apoſtacy. It is declared, That men are bound upon pain of damnation, to forſake and ſuffer all; rather than do any thing againſt their conſcience. In relation to this nothing is remitted or ſoftned, and the weak and timorous are no ways indulged.

As to confidence, it is ſpoken of in ſuch manner, as makes people conceive, that it is the more effectual to ſalvation, the firmer it is, and the more removed from doubt. The greateſt ſinner relies boldly upon the mercy of God, and does not queſtion but that he has a right to apply to himſelf all the promiſes of the Goſpel, provided he believe; that is to ſay, as it is meant, ſo he has but confidence enough.

But when the practice of good works is diſcourſed of, the declarations of the Goſpel are not preſſed with the ſame rigor. That zeal which upon all other heads hearkens to no accommodation, becomes here very tractable; and a great deal of remiſneſs appears as to this article. The doctrines are preſſed, publick profeſſion is ſtrictly enforced, and confidence is highly recommended; but it is ſaid, That moral duties muſt not be ſo ſeverely urged, and that ſomething is to be allowed for humane frailty. And yet it ſeems that as the Scripture inculcates nothing ſo much, as the neceſſity of a good life; ſo it were neceſſary to inſiſt as much at leaſt upon this point, as upon any other, and that it ſhould not be ranked, as it is, in the loweſt degree, and among the leaſt neceſſary things. One would think likewiſe, that the preſſing ſanctification, is to require nothing of men, but what is as eaſy, if not more, than certain other duties, which are abſolutely impoſed on them, upon pain of damnation; ſuch as the forſaking all that is dear to them in this world, and the ſuffering of death in time of perſecution. But without enlarging upon this ſubject, it is evident, that the generality of Chriſtians, do not believe that holineſs is ſo eſſential a part of religion, as it really is; and

that

that they do not well understand the nature of Christianity; from whence it necessarily follows, that they must neglect the practice of holiness.

III. But there are some Prejudices, which do yet more directly attack piety, and they are those which people entertain concerning piety and morality it self. I shall instance this first in the opinion of those, who pretend that morality is not of such great moment in religion, who speak of it with contempt, and cry it down; and who unreasonably setting faith in opposition to good-works; maintain, that it is enough to believe, and that those who insist upon morals do not apprehend the nature of the Gospel. Now one would think that such absurd and unchristian imaginations, should be universally rejected; but because whatever gratifies corruption is usually welcome to men; these opinions have their advocates, even among divines, as might easily be shewn from the printed works of some authors, who seem to have had a design to disparage good works, and to oppose the necessity of sanctification. This Prejudice overturns the foundations of morality, by destroying its necessity, and rendering it contemptible. I only give here a hint of it, because I am to shew in other places, that it is the heighth of extravagance, thus to set up faith against morality, to ascribe all to the one, and to speak but very slightly of the other.

IV. And yet some people do not stop here. They think it is dangerous to insist so much upon morality; nay, some have proceeded so far, as to say, This was one of the characters of Heresy. I confess, this opinion is not very common. It ought not to be imputed to the people, nor even to the Libertines. None but a few conceited divines have had the face to maintain it, which by the by increases the scandal, that is occasioned by such propositions. I am willing to believe that those who advance them, qualific them with some restrictions, and that they are not sensible of the terrible consequences which flow from them; but that they have been betrayed into the speaking or writing of such things, either through some prejudice, or through the heat of dispute. But after all, if these propositions were strictly taken; and set out in their true colours, they could not but be looked upon, as false, rash, scandalous, and capable of producing most dismal effects, especially, being asserted by divines: and if we did not judge charitably of the intentions of their authors, we might justly say, That those who dare disparage morality, and insinuate, that the pressing it is a mark of Heresy: do themselves publish, a most pernicious Heresy. Can it be a mark of Heresy to insist upon that, which our Saviour has so vehemently pressed; which is the only thing he inculcates in his sermon upon the mount; which the Apostles perpetually * urge in their epistles, † and declare to be the end of our whole religion, and the character whereby the children of God are discriminated from the children of the Devil; and without which, both Christ and his Apostles assure us, ‖ that no man shall enter into the kingdom of heaven?

By this, the truth of religion is as much struck at and injured as piety it self. It gives one an indignation to see, that the honour of defending virtue and piety, should be yielded up to Hereticks. To say that for the most

* Matth. v. 6, 7. † 1 Tim. i. 5. 1 John iii. 8.
‖ Matth. vii. 21. Heb. xii. 14.

moſt part, Hereticks are ſtrong upon the head of morality, is in a manner to give up the cauſe; it is the ready way to confirm them in their errors; and it does baſely to aſcribe that to Hereſy, which belongs to true religion, and is the glory of it. It would be to no purpoſe to alledge, that ſome Hereticks have writ upon morality with good ſucceſs. For granting this to be true, it is not a token of their Hereſy; on the contrary, ſo far they are orthodox. Some orthodox Chriſtians have recommended morality as much and better than the Hereticks, becauſe they have eſtabliſhed it upon the foundations and motives, which pure doctrines afford. On the other hand, there have always been Hereticks, who did ſubvert and ruin morality; as for inſtance, thoſe who are deſcribed by St. *Paul* in the ſecond to *Timothy*, and by St. *Peter* in his ſecond epiſtle. It is then very unreaſonable to ſay, That a thing which neither agrees to all Hereticks, nor to Hereticks alone, is a mark of Hereſy. There is much more reaſon to charge thoſe who ſpeak ſo injuriouſly of morality; with maintaining a Hereſy, which comes very near that of the *Gnoſticks*, who were oppoſed by the Apoſtles, and condemned and deteſted by the whole church, as corrupters of the morals of the Goſpel.

V. But tho' the greateſt part of Chriſtians reject the opinions I have now mention'd, and acknowledge the excellency of morality; yet they form to themſelves too eaſie a notion of the duties of it. This is another Prejudice, which does not a little contribute to that neglect of piety they live in. The notion of thoſe who think, that the practice of piety is eaſy, is true in the main; * *God's commandments are not grievous:* † *And Chriſt's yoke is eaſy, and his burthen light.* We ſhould therefore always ſuppoſe, that it is not difficult to lead a good life, and to work out one's ſalvation. But the error lies in imagining, too great an eaſineſs in this, and in not conſidering aright, the nature and the extent of the duties of morality. There are but few whoſe notions in this matter, come up to the ſtandard of the Goſpel, and to that perfection which Chriſtians are to aim at. Few underſtand to what degree the practice of virtue is to be carried: as for the purpoſe; what ſort of juſtice, equity, honeſty, diſintereſtedneſs, purity, or charity becomes a profeſſor of Chriſt's religion? Inſtead of riſing up to that high and ſublime pitch of morality which the Goſpel demands; and inſtead of being acted by noble views and deſigns worthy of Chriſtianity; men commonly take up with mean and ſlight apprehenſions of it. According to the general opinion, a very extraordinary and elevated virtue is not requiſite, in order to be a good man. It is enough for a man if he is not a notorious villain, or a profligate wretch; and if he obſerve ſome of thoſe duties which have a ſhew of ſanctity. Thus holineſs is reduced to the loweſt degree of virtue, or rather, to the leaſt degree of ſin; it is brought to very little, and yet that little is often neglected; for men never go ſo far in practice as they do in ſpeculation; they always do leſs than they think themſelves bound to do; ſo that their actions ſtill fall ſhort of the idea which they form of their duty.

VI. What judgment then are we to make of Chriſtians now a-days? Tho' they ſhould act ſuitably to their notion of piety and morality; yet they

* 1 John v. 3. † Mat. xi. 30.

they would discharge their duty but very indifferently, because that notion is but low and defective But yet as mean and imperfect as it is, their practice does not reach it. They frequently allow themselves in things which are against their own conscience; and tho' they violate the clearest and the easiest rules of virtue, yet they fancy those to be sins from which no man is free, and which will however be forgiven. At this rate corruption must needs be very great.

But as men often form to themselves too easie a notion of piety, so they have sometimes too severe an idea of it. It may perhaps seem at first sight, that it is not very necessary to remark and confute this Prejudice. The general depravation of manners seems to make it evident, that the notions which prevail at this time are not the rigid ones, and that men do not much trouble themselves about the rules, of too austere a devotion or morality. But yet it is usual enough for men to run into this other extream; and such an excessive severity is not so inconsistent as it may be thought, with the corruption of manners. For tho' many frame to themselves too hard and rigid a notion of piety; yet they do not think themselves bound to live according to it, but they leave those maxims to the devout, and they imagine that so much piety is not necessary; so that they fashion to themselves a commodious religion, and such a morality as has nothing that is troublesome or difficult in it.

Howsoever there are many who look upon piety as an austere thing; they conceive it to be an enemy to all joy, and that it debars men of all pleasure, so that it produces nothing but sadness, and melancholy. And they are besides possessed with this error; that the practice of it is uneasie and difficult, or even impossible. But why do men judge of piety with so much prepossession and injustice? This proceeds from two Causes.

The first is their carnal disposition. They are incapable of relishing any other pleasures, but those of the body or of this present life, because they are accustomed to be governed only by their senses; and that is enough to represent piety to them as sower and distasteful; not only because it does not procure to them those gross pleasures; but because it does likewise in many cases oblige them to renounce them.

The second reason why men entertain this Prejudice against piety, is that it is not represented to them in its true shape. And here first, there is a great deal of hurt done by the false pretenders to devotion; who affect a mournful and severe outward appearance, and whose behaviour is often intolerably stern and savage. In the next place, profane men contribute to this mischief; for as they neither know nor love religion, so they make odious pictures of it, and they take a delight in carrying the notions of devotion too far, that it may appear ridiculous.

Thirdly, there are several well-meaning persons, whose zeal being not regulated and softned by a discreet and prudent knowledge, gives an occasion to those unfavourable judgments, which the world passes upon piety. Such people think that it is the duty of a devout person, never to be seen but in an austere appearance, and with a dejected look; they are continually censuring and never pleased; their zeal is either superstitious, scrupulous, or ignorant, sharp, or unseasonable; and so it is extremely apt to alienate men's minds from devotion and piety.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, ſome divines and moraliſts confirm this Prejudice, by their way of recommending the practice of piety, both in their public diſcourſes and in their books. Religion and its duties are often propoſed to the people from the pulpit, in ſuch a ſevere and frightful manner, as is not very fit to make it appear lovely to men, who for the moſt part, have already a Prejudice againſt it. We find too rigid a morality, and ſeveral ſtrained maxims in many ſermons and books of devotion. And it may perhaps be of ſome uſe, to give here ſome inſtances of this kind.

When worldly-minded men are told, that ſalvation is a moſt difficult thing, and that whoever will obtain it, ought to ſpend his life in perpetual mourning; this is no great attractive to gain them to the love of religion. Such maxims may be true in ſome reſpect; but they are falſe and extravagant, when they are propoſed without diſtinction or explication. By the deſcriptions which are ſometimes made of the vanity of the world, and of devotion; one would think, that a man cannot live like a Chriſtian, without laying aſide all ſecular concerns and buſineſs, and giving up himſelf to ſolitude and retirement. Now this is what few men are capable of; and beſides it is againſt the order of Providence, which has placed us in the world, to live and labour in it, and to enjoy the good things which the Divine liberality has provided for us.

That which is aſſerted by ſome moraliſts, concerning the love of God, and their zeal for his glory; ſuppoſes that men are obliged to think actually upon God at all times, and to have a poſitive intention to promote his glory in all the actions of their lives. But ſuch morality, to ſay no more, is abſurd, and impoſſible to be reduced to practice. It is not poſſible for a man to have God always in his thoughts, and to make pious reflections upon every ſtep he takes, or every word he ſpeaks. And there are ſuch actions in life, which cannot without profanation be referred to the glory of God by a direct intention. St. *Paul*, indeed enjoyns us, * *to do all things to the glory of God*; but this rule is not to be taken in the utmoſt ſtrictneſs, nor extended to all particular actions. It is enough to have a ſincere and general intention to procure God's glory, and to do one's duty upon all occaſions. In order to which, theſe four things are neceſſary. 1. That we ſhould not fail to think of God actually, in all thoſe actions that require it. 2. That if by reaſon of the preſent ſtate we are in, we cannot think on God at all times, and in all our actions; we ſhould at leaſt think often upon him, and make frequent reflections upon our own conduct. 3. That in indifferent actions, we ſhould not abuſe our liberty, but demean our ſelves according to the rules which the Goſpel preſcribes; and that we ſhould eſpecially have a great regard to the edification of our neighbour; it being particularly in that ſenſe that this commandment *of doing all things to the glory of God*, is to be underſtood. 4. That we ſhould love God above all things, and that it ſhould be our chief care and endeavour to obey him, and to advance his glory to the utmoſt of our power.

How many ſcruples have been infuſed into men's minds, by ſtraining the ſenſe of this declaration of our Saviour's, † *Men ſhall give an account at*

* 1 Cor. x. 31. † Matth. xii. 36.

at the day of judgment of every idle word that they ſhall ſpeak. What inferences have not been drawn from this place, to fill good men with dread and terror? It is expounded as if all diſcourſes, which neither contribute to the glory of God, nor to the edification of our neighbours, nor to the promoting of our own ſalvation; were thoſe *idle words*, of which men are to give an account to God. And yet it does not appear that words purely idle, are always ſinful, or that they deſerve the ſevere threatning which our Saviour denounces here. We cannot forbear talking every day, of many indifferent things, and holding ſeveral diſcourſes which do neither good nor harm. Indeed if this ſhould grow into a habit, if we ſhould for the moſt part ſpeak only of trifling and frivolous things; it would be a ſin. But I do not apprehend what hurt there can be, in talking now and then of news, of rain, or of the weather. Certainly theſe are not the words which are meant in this declaration. The place where we find it, and the terms in which it is conceived; do manifeſtly ſhew, our Saviour's meaning to be this; That men ſhall give an account at the day of judgment, of all the wicked and impious words which they have ſpoken; and that the *Phariſees* particularly ſhould be anſwerable to God, for the blaſphemies which they uttered againſt his miracles.

Theſe ſtrain'd maxims produce very pernicious effects. They expoſe piety to the flouts and contempt of libertines; and they diſcourage great numbers from it. Young people eſpecially, are by this means diſguſted with religion, and they take up an averſion to it, which they ſeldom ſhake off afterwards. They accuſtom themſelves in that age which is ſo ſenſible of pleaſure, to look upon piety under an auſtere and melancholy form; whilſt on the ſide of the world and of their paſſions, they ſee nothing but ſweetneſs and charms. Between theſe two objects; one of which is ſo enticing, and the other ſo diſguſtful; it is eaſy to imagine which ſide they will chuſe. They run into the embraces of the world with the full ſwing of their affections. But as to religion they muſt be urged and driven; and it is much if they can be brought to make ſome ſteps towards it. Even good men being diſcouraged by this exceſſive ſeverity, do not make that progreſs in ſanctification, which otherwiſe they might. Their conſciences are diſturbed with troubleſome ſcruples and continual fears. It is therefore very neceſſary to remove this prejudice; by repreſenting virtue and piety, under that eaſy and agreeable ſhape which is natural to them; and by propoſing ſuch ideas of religion, as may neither on the one hand, produce ſecurity, and lull men's conſciences aſleep, nor on the other hand, involve them in groundleſs ſcruples.

VII. But if men are averſe to things auſtere and painful; they are wont likewiſe to deſpiſe thoſe, who they think have ſomewhat in them that is mean and ridiculous. And there are many who have ſuch an opinion of piety: which proceeds firſt from the ignorance and corruption of men; who becauſe they are not well acquainted with religion, or are poſſeſſed with falſe notions of honour; look with contempt upon every thing, which does not agree with the prevailing cuſtoms and maxims of the world. And then we may take notice beſides, that libertines do ſometimes obſerve either in that religion which obtains in the ſociety wherein they live; or in the deportment of thoſe who have the reputation

reputation of being devout, ſeveral things, which lead them into this opinion. With relation to doctrines, they find certain articles which men of good ſenſe cannot digeſt, and they perceive manifeſt abuſes in the worſhip; they ſee the people amuſed with childiſh devotions, which favour of nothing elſe but ſuperſtition, credulity or bigottry. Some of thoſe who do profeſs devotion ſeem to them to hold opinions, contrary to ſound reaſon, and to have ſome odd and ridiculous ways with them. They perhaps, obſerve in the miniſters of religion ſeveral whimſies, ignorances, and weakneſſes; they do not always find the beſt ſenſe in diſcourſes of piety, neither do they think the idea which is given them of religion and it's duties, to be true, rational, or ſatisfactory. From all this they conclude, that to give themſelves up to it, would be a diſgrace to them; that it is calculated only for the vulgar, and for weak minds; and that the being neither pious nor devout, argues a ſtrength and a greatneſs of ſoul. This certainly is a moſt falſe and unjuſt prejudice. There is nothing more ſerious, nor more worthy of eſteem and reſpect than religion, and it is the higheſt pitch of injuſtice, to take an eſtimate of it by the errors and weakneſſes of men. But yet this prejudice is very common.

VIII. Laſtly, we are to rank among the prejudices and falſe notions of men concerning religion, the opinions of thoſe who are infatuated with myſtical piety and fanaticiſm. And it is the more neceſſary to caution men againſt thoſe opinions, becauſe they are grown of late years to be very common. Fanaticiſm ſpreads very much, and there is ſcarce a country in *Europe*, where it does not obtain under various denominations, and where it has not occaſioned ſome diſturbance.

It would be difficult to give here an exact account of myſtical piety and fanaticiſm. It is a ſubject upon which we cannot ſpeak very clearly, becauſe we can hardly have perſpicuous and diſtinct ideas of it; beſides, that the *Myſticks* are not agreed among themſelves: they are a ſect which is ſub-divided almoſt to infinity; for not to mention the *Anabaptiſts*, the *Quakers*, the *Quietiſts*, and all thoſe who come up to the heighth of fanatical extravagances; there are many particular ſects which would ſcorn the name, and yet are wholly, or in part, poſſeſſed with the principles of the fanaticks. But in the main here is their character.

They are almoſt all agreed in one thing; which is, that they make but very little account of outward means, and of thoſe acts which concern the *exterior* of religion; ſuch are the order of the church, government, diſcipline, preaching, liturgies, and the public exerciſes of devotion. All theſe, if we believe them, are to be conſidered, as the firſt elements of piety, which are uſeful only to imperfect Chriſtians. They have no great eſteem neither for thoſe labours and ſtudies, by which men endeavour to acquire knowledge. They reaſon little about religion, and for the moſt part, they alledge no other arguments for the articles of their belief, but the inward ſenſe they have of them. They do not condemn morality and good-works, but among themſelves, they ſpeak but feebly of them, and in ſuch a ſtrain, as leſſens conſiderably their uſefulneſs and neceſſity. They ſay, that our works are nothing but defilement and abomination; that God does not look upon works, and that man ought not to judge of his condition by them; but that all depends upon faith,

and an union with God. Hence it is that thoſe books, which lay a great ſtreſs upon the practice of Chriſtian virtues, do not reliſh beſt with them. They prefer contemplations, mediations and inward recollections, before an active life and the practice of morality. Nay there are ſome who think, that all the care which men uſe, and all the efforts that they make to advance in piety, ſignifie but little. According to them, the way to perfection and ſolid virtue, is for a man to be in a ſtate of *inaction*, to go out of himſelf, to *annihilate* himſelf; to have neither thoughts, nor deſires, nor will, but to be as it were *dead* in the ſight of God; for thus they expreſs themſelves in figurative and myſterious words. Under pretence of aſcribing all to God, they aſſert, that man is a mere nothing, and an *abyſs* of miſery; that in order to be happy, it is enough for us to be ſenſible of our *nothingneſs*, and to wait in *ſilence* and *tranquillity*, till God is pleaſed to work his will in us; and that when the ſoul is thus in the ſtate of *inaction*, and intirely abandons it ſelf to God, then it is, that God ſpeaks to, and operates in it. What they ſay concerning man's *nothingneſs*, does not hinder but that moſt of them pretend to be in a ſtate of perfection, and look upon the reſt of Chriſtians, as carnal men, who are yet in darkneſs, and who never taſted that which they call the *heavenly gift*. I might relate here their reſining upon divine love and upon prayer; but what I have ſaid is ſufficient, to diſcover the ſpirit and character of fanaticiſm.

I am far from charging all thoſe who hold theſe opinions, with hypocriſy and impiety; I am perſuaded that there are good men amongſt them, who are not ſenſible of their errors; ſo that I cannot but blame the ſeverity which is uſed towards them in ſome places, and the odious imputations that are caſt upon them in order to vilify them all, without diſtinction. If they err, it is for the moſt part, thro' weakneſs and prepoſſeſſion, rather than thro' malice.

Nay it may be ſaid in their behalf, that theſe illuſions would not have grown ſo common, if there had not been a general, and in ſome meaſure an incurable corruption in the world. But they ſaw every where a prodigious decay of piety, and little hope of amendment. For what may we not ſay of the preſent ſtate of Chriſtianity? There is in many places an ignorant and ſuperſtitious Clergy and people; whoſe whole religion conſiſts, in ceremonies, and in devotions, which are merely external, and often ridiculous; above all, there appears in thoſe places a deluge of immorality. Is it then to be wonder'd at, that quietiſm and fanaticiſm ſhould rear up their heads in ſuch places? Theſe groſs abuſes do not indeed prevail every where; but generally ſpeaking, there is but little of true piety among Chriſtians, there is ſcarce any order or diſcipline left amongſt them; men live as they pleaſe; the ſacraments are prophaned; the precepts of the goſpel are trampled under foot; charity and honeſty are almoſt entirely baniſhed. No man ſets about the redreſſing of theſe diſorders; church-men make it their capital buſineſs, to maintain their diſputes and their tenets, and they apply themſelves but faintly to the reforming of manners. Religion being upon this foot, many who had good intentions, could not but perceive that this was not true and genuine Chriſtianity. But becauſe they ſaw no likelihood of things being brought to a better poſture; or becauſe they wanted capacity to find out the occaſions

caſions and remedies of ſo great an evil; or laſtly, becauſe they were men of weak parts, they hearkned to thoſe who propoſed to them this myſtical piety.

This is the cauſe of the progreſs of fanaticiſm, and the reaſon why ſome perſons of virtue and piety are engag'd in that party. And therefore the true way to reclaim them, would be to re-eſtabliſh order in the church, and to labour for the reformation of manners. As long as theſe are neglected, all the precautions and methods uſed againſt fanaticks by the clergy, or by the magiſtrate, will either prove unſucceſsful, or be found contrary to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity.

But after all, this ſpirit of fanaticiſm is highly pernicious. For firſt it opens a gap to all manner of licentiouſneſs. Not to mention the miſchiefs which may redound from thence upon civil ſociety; myſtical piety is a large fountain of illuſions; it leads men into endleſs errors, and it is apt to turn all religion upſide down; for as it is lodged only in inward ſentiments it cannot happen otherwiſe, but that vaſt numbers of men who either want knowledge or ſtrength of parts, will take the wanderings of their own fancies for divine inſpirations. I know that ſome of thoſe contemplative men, acknowledge the Scripture for the rule of their faith, and read it carefully; but the miſchief is, that thro' their prejudices, they fix a wrong ſenſe upon it, ſo that what they read does but confirm them in their errors. Their expoſitions are very ſingular; they do not affix to words the ſame ideas which other men do; they forſake the literal ſenſe, to run after myſtical explications ſuitable to their preconceived notions; they reject or make very light of thoſe helps which the knowledge of languages, hiſtory, and the ſcope of ſacred writers, afford; and it is one of their principles, that women, mechanicks, and the moſt ſimple people, are able to underſtand the Scripture as well, if not better, than the moſt learned doctors.

2. Fanaticiſm is an evil which is hardly to be remedied: a heretick, or a prophane perſon, may ſooner be undeceived, than a man intoxicated with myſtical devotion; for theſe will reaſon, but the other will hearken to no reaſoning; ſo that he is proof againſt all the arguments which can be offered to him. It is in vain to diſpute with people, who look on all thoſe who are not of their mind, as ignorant men; who think themſelves illuminated above the reſt of mankind, and who return no other anſwer to the objection urged againſt them; but that they are otherwiſe perſuaded in their minds. There is no good to be done upon them; either by reaſoning or by ſenſe, of which they make but little uſe; or even by the Scripture, wherein they ſeek nothing leſs, than the literal meaning.

3. Tho' myſtical men profeſs a ſublime piety; yet their principles favour corruption more than one may be apt to imagine. How can we reconcile thoſe maxims concerning *contemplation*, *inanition*, and *ſilence*, with that activity, zeal, and fervour which the Scripture recommends? If a man is a mere nothing, if he is to wait patiently till God works his will in him, and ſpeaks to his ſoul; it is in vain to exhort men, and it would be to no purpoſe for them to uſe any endeavours on their part. Beſides, that contempt of outward means which the *Myſticks* expreſs, makes way for a total neglect of devotion, introduces diſorder and licentiouſneſs, and is directly oppoſite to God's deſign, who thought fit to

preſcribe the uſe of thoſe means. I might add, that the principles of fanaticiſm are commodious enough for ſinners, ſo that I do not wonder, that ſome of them ſhould go over to that party. A devotion which conſiſts in acknowledging a man's own *nothingneſs*, or in *contemplation* and *ſilence*, is much more acceptable to a corrupt perſon, than an exact morality, which obliges a man, to do acts of repentance, to put his own hand to the work, and to ſet about the reforming of his life, and the practiſing of Chriſtian virtues.

Upon the whole matter, fanaticiſm makes religion contemptible; becauſe the men of the world confound true with myſtical piety. They fanſy that a man cannot be devout, without being ſomething viſionary and enthuſiaſtical; and that devotion does not well agree with ſenſe and reaſon.

The prejudices I have mentioned in this chapter, are not the only ones which foment and cheriſh corruption; ſome others might have been added, but they may more conveniently be ranged under the titles of ſome of the following chapters. What I have ſaid in this, does yet farther ſhew the neceſſity of good inſtruction; which may conquer theſe prejudices, and give men true notions of religion and piety.

CAUSE III.

The Maxims and Sentiments which are made uſe of to authorize Corruption.

IT has been ſhewn in the two preceding chapters, that men are generally involved in ignorance, and that they entertain ſuch notions concerning religion and piety, as muſt of neceſſity maintain corruption in the world. But they are likewiſe poſſeſt with divers particular maxims and ſentiments, which lead directly to libertiniſm. A modern author very well obſerves; * *That people are not only very little acquainted with the extent of that purity which the Goſpel requires; but that they are beſides full of maxims, incomparably more pernicious, than errors of pure ſpeculation.* Theſe maxims do the more certainly produce corruption, becauſe they are uſed to authorize and countenance it. And in fact, men's blindneſs and licentiouſneſs are come to that paſs; that not being contented with the practice of vice; they do beſides plead authority for an ill life. They proceed ſo far as to defend the cauſe of corruption; they diſpute with thoſe that condemn them, and they vent ſuch maxims and ſentiments, as (if we believe them) will juſtifie, or at leaſt excuſe all their diſorders. I could not omit here the examining of thoſe maxims, ſince their effect is ſo pernicious; I ſhall therefore obſerve them as the third cauſe of corruption.

The maxims and ſentiments which favour corruption are of two ſorts. Some are viſibly profane and impious; ſuch are a great many maxims of the libertines, which go for current in the world: but there are others which

* *New Moral Eſſays*, Tom. I. in the preface.

which men pretend to draw from religion. I shall insist particularly upon the latter, because as they are taken from religion itself, they are by much the more dangerous. When profane people undertake to defend vice with maxims which are manifestly impious, we stand upon our guard against them, and we may confute them by the maxims of religion. But when they employ religion and the truths of it, in the defence of vice; the danger of being seduced is infinitely greater.

I shall reduce the maxims which are made use of to authorize corruption to these four orders.

I rank those in the *first* order, by which men endeavour to prove, that holiness is not absolutely necessary.

The *second* order contains those which tend to shew, that the practice of holiness is impossible.

The *third* comprehends those which insinuate, that it is dangerous for a man to apply himself to good-works.

The *fourth* and the *last* includes those which are alledged to excuse corruption.

But as it is not less necessary, to know the remedies against corruption, than to discover the causes of it; I shall not only mention, but as I go on confute those maxims.

I. Although nothing is more clearly asserted in the Gospel, than the necessity of good-works; yet Christians entertain many opinions which destroy this necessity, and which consequently open a door to licentiousness. The necessity of good-works cannot be overthrown but one of these two ways; either by saying, that God does not require them; or else by maintaining, that tho' God requires them, yet a man may be saved without the practice of them.

1. In order to prove that God does not require sanctity and good-works, as a condition absolutely necessary to salvation, these two maxims are abused. 1. *That we are not saved by our works.* And 2. *That faith is sufficient to salvation.* The first of these maxims is intended to exclude good-works; and by the second men would substitute another mean for obtaining salvation. I refer the discussing of these two maxims to the next chapter, because they are drawn from the holy Scripture.

II. Men endeavour to persuade themselves, that tho' they neglect holiness, yet for all that, they shall not be excluded from salvation. And that which contributes most to flatter them in this imagination, is first, the notion they have formed to themselves of the mercy of God. *God*, say they, *is good, and will not judge us with the utmost rigour.* This is said every day, and it makes every body hope for salvation. The Divine mercy indeed is without question, the only ground we have to hope for salvation. But the vilest affront we can offer to that mercy, is to make it an occasion of security. Because God is good and merciful, must not we therefore endeavour to please him? May we freely offend him, because he is good, and we hope he will forgive us?

Those who reason at this rate, understand very little that the Divine mercy is. They must suppose that it extends indifferently to all men without any regard to their obedience or disobedience. But this supposition is evidently false, and contrary to the holy Scripture. The effects of God's mercy, are promised only to those who fear him and depart from

evil; and by conſequence, it is a falſe and pernicious maxim, to ſay, *So much holineſs is not neceſſary; God is good, and he will not mark ſeverely what is done amiſs.* This is to aſcribe to God an eaſineſs and a connivance, utterly unbecoming the ſovereign Judge of the world.

It is ſaid beſides, *That God will not judge us rigorouſly.* That indeed, is true; God is indulgent towards us, and the Goſpel is a covenant of grace, in which God has a great regard to our preſent condition, and weakneſs. But it is likewiſe certain, that God will judge us according to the rigour of the covenant of grace; and that no ſalvation is to be had for thoſe who do not fulfil the condition of the Goſpel; now this condition, is a true faith, inciting us to holineſs. This muſt be granted, and we muſt acknowledge the neceſſity of performing this condition, and of leading a holy life; or elſe the Goſpel is but a jeſt; and we muſt ſay, that God does not ſpeak ſeriouſly in it; that indeed he preſcribes certain conditions, that he commands and threatens; but that nothing of all this is to be ſtrictly underſtood; ſo that tho' a man does not comply with the conditions which God requires, yet he ſhall feel the effects of his clemency. If this is true, there is an end to the Chriſtian religion.

2. It will no doubt be replied, *That provided a man repents, and aſks God's forgiveneſs, he ſhall be ſaved.* This is an unqueſtionable truth; ſo by repentance we mean that, which the Goſpel requires, and which conſiſts in a ſincere deteſtation of ſin, in true converſion and amendment of life. But this is falſe, if by repentance, we mean only a general confeſſion of ſins, accompanied with ſome ſenſe of grief and fear, whereby ſinners hope at the hour of death, to atone for all the diſorder of a vitious life. I would ſhew here that this is no ſaving repentance, but that I am to handle this matter purpoſely in another chapter.

If men commonly neglect thoſe things, which are not very neceſſary; they apply themſelves much leſs, to thoſe which they think to be impoſſible. Now this is the notion which men commonly have of piety. It is ſaid firſt, *That it is impoſſible for a man to be ſo holy, and to do that which God commands.* A great many like the precepts of the Goſpel very well, and acknowledge their juſtice and excellency, *Would to God*, ſay they, *we could live thus, but we are not able to do it:* and being poſſeſt with this opinion, they uſe no endeavour to practiſe thoſe duties which they own to be juſt; or to attain to that holineſs, to which God calls them. And indeed, what man would attempt that, which he looks upon as impoſſible?

Now what is ſaid of man's incapacity to do good, is very true, when we ſpeak of man conſidered barely as man, in the corrupt ſtate of nature. But the queſtion is, Whether thoſe whom God has reſcued out of that ſtate, and called to the communion of the Goſpel, are incapable to arrive at that degree of holineſs, which he requires of them? The Apoſtles give us another notion of thoſe who know and believe in Jeſus Chriſt. They repreſent to us indeed the miſerable condition in which men naturally are, and the greatneſs of their corruption; but they tell us at the ſame time, that Chriſt is come to deliver them from that ſtate, * *that a Chriſtian can do all things through Chriſt, that ſtrengtheneth him:* † *that he is perfect and throughly furniſhed to all good works:* ‡ *that he who loves God keeps his commandments, and overcomes the world.* This plainly imports,

* Phil. iv. 13. † 2 Tim. xi. 21. ‡ 1 John ver. 34.

that we are no longer in that ſtate of corruption and death, wherein man being left to himſelf, is a ſlave to ſin; or at leaſt that we ought to be no longer in that ſtate, after all that which the grace of God has done for us. It is the greateſt injury, that can be done to Chriſt and his grace, to ſay, That his coming, his death, his Goſpel, and his Spirit, are not able to ſanctify men; and that after they are redeemed and adopted by God, it is impoſſible for them to be good, and to do what he commands.

If this was true, where would be the power of the Chriſtian religion, and what could we think of God's proceeding when he addreſſes his commandments to us? At this rate, he gives us a law, not that we ſhould keep it; but rather to convince us that we cannot obſerve it. In this caſe, what will become of our Saviour's precepts, and what are we to think of thoſe pure and exalted morals which he has left us? Evangelical holineſs will be nothing elſe but an imaginary and unpracticable ſanctity. Thoſe ideas of perfection will be but meer ideas, without any reality; like thoſe of that philoſopher, who form'd a fine ſcheme of the beſt government of a common-wealth; but it was a project which could never be executed. It were to be wiſhed, we might remember, that, thanks be to God, we are no longer heathens; and that men ſhould be encouraged, and not diſheartened by extravagant maxims and diſcourſes. Which is the imitating thoſe cowardly ſpies, who after they had viewed the land of *Canaan*, went about to diſpirit the *Iſraelites*, and to perſuade them, that the conqueſt of that land was impoſſible.

2. It is not only ſaid, that we are not able to be ſo holy as the Goſpel requires; but it is added beſides, *that God would not have us be ſo; that he makes uſe of ſin to keep us humble, and to make us feel the conſtant need we have of his grace, as well as to kindle in us, the deſire of a better and more perfect life.* This maxim repreſents corruption as a thing unavoidable, agreeable to the will of God, and in ſome meaſure uſeful. But what can be more falſe than to pretend, *that God would not have us to be holy?* Why then does he command us to be ſo? Why does St. *Paul* ſay, * *This is the will of God, to wit, your ſanctification?* What can be meant by theſe words of St. *Peter*, † *As he who has called you is holy, be ye alſo holy in all manner of converſation; for it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy?* If it be ſaid, that God would have us to be holy, but not perfectly holy, as we ſhall be in heaven: I aſk no more, Who did ever pretend that we ought to be as holy in this world, as we are to be in the life to come? Nothing elſe is required of men, but that they ſhould be as holy, as God would have them to be, and as holy as his grace enables them to be in this life. To alledge againſt this, *That God would not have us be ſo holy*; is a ridiculous evaſion, which implies a contradiction. Beſides, this maxim taken in that ſenſe, which it firſt offers to the mind, ſeems to make God the author of ſin. For it ſuppoſes, not only that God would not have us to be ſo holy, but which is more ſtrange, that he wills the contrary, that he has his views, deſigns, and reaſons, why he ſhould not permit us, to attain that degree of holineſs, to which the Goſpel calls us. That is the meaning of theſe words, *That God makes uſe of ſin, to keep us humble, to make us feel the need we have of his grace, and to make us long for another life.* If it was ſaid only, That God had ſome reaſons to permit ſin: ſuch

* 1 Theſſ. iv. 3. † 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

such an assertion would be true; but those who alledge this maxim, to excuse themselves from obeying the Gospel, ascribe to God a positive design; and a direct intention, which renders that obedience impossible; which derogates from his holiness and justice, and which is manifestly contrary to those declarations which he himself has made in Scripture. If it were further said, That our sins ought to humble us, and that they should serve to make us wiser, and more circumspect for the time to come, and to raise in us a longing after a happier state; this would be very reasonable. But it does not follow from thence, that we are to ascribe to God, those views and intentions which this maxim ascribes to him. There is a vast difference between the design which God proposes to himself, and the event of things. These two should never be confounded. Neither ought the natural effect of sin, to be confounded with the consequences of it. The natural effect of sin can be no other but evil; if the consequences of it are not always fatal, and if men reap some advantage from it, that is, as we say, by accident. However God has no need of vice to form us to humility; he has other means to humble us, and to make us feel the need we stand in of his grace; without being necessitated to let us live under the dominion of sin, to produce those dispositions in us. And there remain still even in the very holiest men, matter enough for them to have recourse to the Divine mercy, and to aspire to a better life, notwithstanding all the progress they can make in holiness. This will be fully cleared in the sequel of this chapter.

3. Here is another maxim which is pretty common; it is said, *That this world is the place of corruption, that this life is the time of sin, and that holiness is reserved for heaven.* Men's minds are so infected with this imagination; that we here it said every day, even by those who have some piety; *That we live in this world only to offend God, and that we do nothing but sin.* But certainly, nothing is more contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel, than this: for tho' it is true, in a sound sense, that this world is the place of corruption, and that sin will never be entirely abolished but in heaven; yet that does by no means excuse us from serving and fearing God, as long as we live here. The first thing a Christian ought to know; is that God has placed him in this world, not to offend, but to glorifie and serve him. The gospel tells us, every where, that this life is the time which God gives us to sanctify our selves in. That this earth is the place where Christian virtues are to be practised; that now is the time to labour, *to walk*, *to fight*, and *to sow*, if we intend to obtain salvation; and that whoever neglects these duties shall be shut out of heaven. In the life to come these opportunities will be over, the door will be shut, and the sentence which God shall pronounce at the day of judgment, will be founded upon that which men do in this life.

Nay, we may draw an argument from the nature of holiness it self, to demonstrate, that the practice of it is not referred to another life. The greatest part of the duties which God prescribes; such as repentance, patience, chastity, sobriety, almsgiving, and hope, cannot be practised in heaven. Here then, is the time, the place, and the opportunity, to perform these duties. Let us reflect upon what St. *Paul* says, in his epistle to *Titus*, chap. xi. There he declares, *That the grace of God which brings salvation, teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

world. That is, in this life, and upon earth; and then he adds, *looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt.* He makes a diſtinction between the duty, and the hope of a Chriſtian; between this world and that which is to come. This life is the time, and this world the place, wherein we ought to practiſe temperance, juſtice, and godlineſs. It muſt not be aſked, where the difference then lies, between this life and the other, between grace and glory? For the difference is great and ſenſible enough in other reſpects. In the next life we ſhall be perfectly holy; our holineſs will be of another nature than it is here; we ſhall be like the angels, and as we ſhall practiſe no longer a great many duties, which we practiſe here on earth, ſo we ſhall exerciſe many virtues, which cannot be exerciſed in this life.

4. I ought not to omit here another maxim, which is not only very common, but is likewiſe moſt pernicious, by reaſon of the uſe that is made of it. Some ſay, *That there was always, and that there will always be corruption; that this is the way of the world, that men will always be men, and that the world will not change.* It is neceſſary to dwell a little upon this maxim, becauſe it is ſpecious, and tends as well as the former, to make men believe that corruption is neceſſary and unavoidable. It has beſides a general influence upon the ſubject matter and deſign of this book; for it is to little purpoſe to deſcant upon the ſources of corruption, if there is no amendment to be hoped for. I have four things to ſay upon this maxim.

1. The inference which is made from it is abſurd. For tho' an evil is general, it does not follow, that it is to no purpoſe to endeavour to keep our ſelves free from it; unleſs it were an evil from which men could not poſſibly preſerve themſelves. There have been always and there will always be diſeaſes in the world; and yet no man hitherto has been ſo weak as to maintain, that the precautions and remedies which are uſed againſt diſeaſes, are altogether uſeleſs. Thus tho' corruption reigns in the world; yet that does not hinder, but that men ought to uſe thoſe means which God affords them to that end.

2. This maxim is founded upon a falſe ſuppoſition. For tho' it is true, that there has been always, and there always will be corruption in the world; yet it ought not to be ſuppoſed, that this corruption is alike at all times, or that things are always to be in the ſame ſtate they now are in. This were a falſe ſuppoſition and contrary to experience, as may eaſily be proved with reſpect to the time paſt, the preſent, and the future. Firſt, when we reflect upon paſt ages, we cannot ſay that all times have been alike, in reference to religion. It is not to be denied, but that before Chriſt's coming, the world was plunged in a general corruption, and that the ſtate of it has been conſiderably altered by the preaching of the goſpel. Can any one deny but that the primitive church was purer, than the church which we find in the ninth or tenth century? At this day, tho' there is a general diſſolutenеſs, yet there is more or leſs corruption in ſome places than in others. It is true in fact, that where the goſpel is duly preached, and where there is ſome order and diſcipline left, there appears more piety and religion than in other places. As for the time to come we muſt not think it impoſſible to reſtore things to a better ſtate, or imagine that the world will always continue as it is, tho' the means

means were uſed which God hasappointed to reform it. For this will no ſooner be done, but corruption will abate; as I hope to make it appear, in the ſecond part of this book.

3. This maxim is directly contrary to the word of God. The ſcripture often ſpeaks of the corruption of the world, but does it always in ſuch a manner, as gives us to underſtand that Chriſtians may, and ought to renounce it. St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the ſinful courſes which the world lies in, *Eph.* xi. But he ſuppoſes, that the *Epheſians* did no longer follow thoſe courſes after they were converted to the Chriſtian religion. The ſame apoſtle commands us, * *not to be conformed to this preſent world.* And St. *James* when he deſcribes the ſpirit and character of that † *pure and undefiled religion*, which is acceptable to God, he tells us, among other things, that it conſiſts *in a man's keeping himſelf unſpotted from the world.*

4. In the laſt place, this maxim is extreamly dangerous. In that ſenſe and deſign in which it is propoſed, it leads to impiety, it robs religion of all its power, and it furniſhes libertines with a plea, which does intirely juſtify them. For in ſhort, either corruption may be remedied, and men may be reduced to a more Chriſtian life; or it may not. If it cannot be remedied, this maxim is true, and prophane men are in the right. But in that caſe, I ſay it again, religion is but a name; for if no ſtop can be given to corruption, if things muſt ſtill go on at the ſame rate; why do we talk of religion, or why do we preach the goſpel? We may teach and exhort as long as we pleaſe, but for all that, there will be neither more nor leſs ſin; men will always be what they are, and the world will not alter. What notion muſt this give us of the efficacy of Chriſtianity, or of the ſincerity of its precepts, promiſes and threatnings? I grant then, that corruption is great, that the courſe of the world is very bad, and that in all probability, there will always be wickedneſs upon earth. But that this corruption ſhould be always the ſame, ſo that no reformation can be hoped; is what cannot be maintained without affronting religion, without introducing fatality and extinguiſhing all zeal among Chriſtians.

III. By the maxims we have hitherto examined, men endeavour to prove, that the practice of holineſs, is either of no great neceſſity, or that it is impoſſible. But there are ſome others, which repreſent the ſtudy of virtue, as dangerous; ſo that here vicious men do not ſtand barely upon the defenſive part, but they attack their adverſaries, who recommend the duties of holineſs.

1. They pretend, that we cannot inſiſt ſo much upon works, without obſcuring the glory of the divine mercy. *We muſt aſcribe all*, ſay they, *to mercy, and nothing to our own righteouſneſs.* There is no true Chriſtian, but acknowledges, that our ſalvation is entirely owing to the divine mercy; and rejects the opinion which attributes any merit to good-works. It is that mercy which gave us Chriſt for our redeemer, and our ſalvation is founded upon that redemption. It is that mercy which pardons the ſins of thoſe who believe and repent, and which bears with the infirmities of regenerate Chriſtians. And it is from the ſame mercy, that we expect that glorious and un-merited reward, which is laid up in hea-

* Rom. xii. 2. † James i. 2, 7.

ven for good men. All theſe are ſo many acts of the pure mercy of God. But as we have ſhewed that the mercy which ſaves us, does not excuſe us from good-works, ſo the neceſſity of good-works, does not leſſen in the leaſt the riches of God's mercy. Unleſs we admit that there are contradictions in ſcripture; we muſt acknowledge, that the doctrine of ſanctification, does perfectly agree with the doctrine of grace.

And in truth, to ſay, that God gave up his Son to death, in order to ſave men, and that he will grant remiſſion of ſins, and eternal happineſs, to every believing and repenting ſinner; is as much as can be ſaid to magnify the divine mercy: except we ſhould pretend, that God would be more merciful, if he did indifferently ſave all mankind, and reward vice and virtue alike; but this would be a horrid thought, and no leſs than downright blaſphemy. Then ſinners might ſay indeed, *Let us continue in ſin, that grace may abound.*

Let us ſuppoſe that a prince pardons a rebellious ſubject, and that he is ready to confer the greateſt honours and benefits upon him, on condition that this ſubject ſhall accept of the pardon that is offered him, and ſhall relapſe no more into the ſame crime; would any man be ſo unreaſonable as to ſay, that the clemency of that prince would be much greater, if he did grant his favours to this rebel, tho' he ſhould perſiſt in his crime? And yet this is the ſame thing which ſome would have God do. It is very ſtrange, that any one ſhould think to honour God, by ſuch conceits, as do not only injure his mercy, but his other perfections too. Becauſe God is merciful, muſt we forget that he is holy, juſt and good? It is ſaid, *That we muſt aſcribe all to the mercy of God*; what then, muſt we have no regard to his holineſs, his juſtice and his truth? Muſt what the ſcripture tells of theſe laſt perfections, be faintly and tenderly expounded, whilſt we preſs and ſcrue up to the higheſt pitch, what it ſays of mercy.

As to what is added, *That we ought to aſcribe nothing to our own righteouſneſs*; it is unqueſtionably true. But do we aſcribe any thing to man, when we ſay, that he is bound to do his duty, and to accept the favour which God is pleaſed to beſtow upon him? Can any man ſay, that the rebel I mentioned juſt now, is the author of his own happineſs, and that he deſerves the pardon granted him by his prince; becauſe he accepts of it, and fulfils the condition upon which it is offered? What reaſon then has a man to value himſelf upon his own righteouſneſs, or to arrogate any merit to himſelf, ſince he is indebted to the grace of God, both for the beginnings and the progreſs of his ſanctification? In ſhort, we ſhould take heed, that for fear of aſcribing any thing to man, we may not rob the divine grace of what belongs to it, by not acknowledging its gifts and power in a regenerate man.

2. Here is another maxim, which is alledged in confirmation of the preceding and which aims at the ſame mark; it is this, *That we muſt not ſpeak ſo much of good-works, leſt we inſpire men with pride and preſumption.* And to ſupport this maxim it is uſual, to run out upon men's inclination to pride; and upon the heinouſneſs of that ſin. But this maxim proceeds only from the falſe and confuſed notions which men have about religious matters.

Either this maxim has no ſenſe at all, or elſe it amounts to this; that whoſoever applies himſelf to holineſs and good-works, is in danger of falling

falling into pride; and that a neglect of virtue contains a man within the bounds of humility. Which is as much as to ſay, that a man may be holy without humility, and humble without holineſs. Two things which are the moſt ridiculous and contradictory, that can be aſſerted. At this rate it would be a dangerous thing to be a good man, and more ſafe to be otherwiſe. By purſuing virtue and holineſs a man draws near to ſin, and to the greateſt of ſins, I mean pride; and by neglecting holineſs, he attains humility, which is one of the chief Chriſtian virtues. If this is true, all that we call vice or virtue, is but an empty ſound. It is much that men ſhould not ſee, that there can be no holineſs without humility, nor humility without holineſs; that where there is holineſs, there is humility, and pride is excluded; and that where pride is, there is no true ſanctification. The holier a man grows, he becomes the more humble; and he is ſo far from coming the nearer to pride by proceeding in holineſs, that on the contrary he removes the farther from it. The inſtance of our bleſſed Saviour, who was both perfectly holy, and perfectly humble; is a proof, that humility is not incompatible with holineſs.

But the nature of humility is not well underſtood. There are many who conceive no other humility, but that which ariſes from the diſorders of a vicious and irregular life. So that when they would humble good men, they rank them among the vileſt ſinners; they make them ſay, that there is nothing but wickedneſs and abomination in them; and that they have deſerved eternal damnation by innumerable ſins which they have committed, every moment of their lives, and even by the beſt actions they have done. The ſtrongeſt expreſſions and the moſt exceſſive hyperboles, are ſcarce ſufficient to exaggerate the number and greatneſs of their ſins. But there is enough of other inducements and motives to humility, without thus confounding vice with virtue. It would be a pretty ſort of humility, for a man to live in ſin, to be at defiance with God, to do nothing for his ſake, and then with all this to confeſs himſelf a miſerable ſinner.

Pride and preſumption ſhould not be encouraged; but yet under the pretence of humbling men, we ought not to turn them into blocks, or to confound a good man with a profligate ſinner. When we inveigh againſt the pride of man, we ought not to ſink his courage; for that would immediately make him incapable of any thing that is good. Under colour of honouring God, we muſt not diſhonour his workmanſhip, ſpeak ſlightingly of his gifts, and overlook his image, in thoſe who bear it in a double capacity; as they are men, and as they are Chriſtians. It is a piece of pride to arrogate any thing to our ſelves which we have not, or which does not come from us; but it is a falſe humility, it is hypocriſy, not to acknowledge the graces of God in us.

It is objected; *That ſome preſume much upon themſelves, that man is very apt to flatter himſelf*, and to this purpoſe, the *Phariſees* are mentioned, *who truſted in their own righteouſneſs*. To this I reply, that thoſe preſumptuous perſons are hypocrites, who have no ſolid piety. I ſay, that the grace of God beats down that pride, and that the *Phariſees* had nothing but an external righteouſneſs, a deceitful and hypocritical ſanctity. It is therefore without reaſon, that men cry down holineſs, and pretend that the ſtudy of good-works begets preſumption, becauſe there have been,

and

and there ſtill are hypocrites. If we may ſay where pride is to be found; it is in thoſe wild and extravagant moraliſts, who make all theſe objections. Thoſe men aſcribe very little to good-works, and yet what opinion do they not entertain of themſelves? They fancy themſelves God's favourites, and the truly humble men; and all this by virtue of their ſtock of confidence: and which is yet worſe, they judge raſhly of thoſe, who endeavour to live better than themſelves, and they make bold to call them *Phariſees* and hypocrites. Is not this a moſt intolerable preſumption and boldneſs?

3. The abettors of corruption inſiſt mightily upon this maxim, *That exceſs in all things is to be condemned; and that piety, when carried too far, degenerates into ſuperſtition and hypocriſy.* It is not only the libertines ſpeak after this manner; many who would be thought wiſe and rational men, uſe the ſame language. They pretend to virtue, they condemn atheiſm and impiety; but they likewiſe condemn thoſe who would tie men to the ſtrict practice of the duties of holineſs. *In all things*, ſay they, *a juſt medium is to be obſerved.* The worſt of it is, that ſome moraliſts give an occaſion to theſe opinions, by the pictures they make of hypocritical and ſuperſtitious men. They repreſent them as men, who carry all the appearances of devout perſons; they tell us that hypocriſy goes beyond true devotion; and they are not aware that by this, they turn religion into ridicule, and render it odious.

This maxim as well as the former, is founded upon the un-accurate notions, which moſt people have concerning morals; for it will appear to every man who examines this matter with ſome care, 1. That piety can never be carried too far, and that we can never do too much in obedience to God, and in compliance with our duty. And 2. That piety and ſuperſtition, or hypocriſy, are things oppoſite to one another; ſo that to imagine, that a diligent and earneſt application to piety, leads men to ſuperſtition, or hypocriſy, is a monſtrous abſurdity, and the higheſt contradiction that can be maintained. It is juſt as if one ſhould ſay, that gold or ſilver by being very much refined might at laſt degenerate into lead, or earth. How or which way can piety turn to ſuperſtition, or hypocriſy? This is a thing that cannot be conceived. As long as men reaſon upon true principles, they may purſue them with aſſurance, and without fear of running themſelves into falſe or dangerous conſequences. Men will never fall into ſuperſtition or hypocriſy by the practice of virtue. So far from it, that the more true piety a man has, he will find himſelf at the greater diſtance from ſuperſtition and hypocriſy: and a ſuperſtitious perſon is ſo far from out-ſtripping a good man, that on the contrary he comes infinitely behind him. Solid virtue is always attended with theſe two characters: firſt it is ſincere and from the heart, and by that it deſtroys hypocriſy, inſtead of producing it: and then ſecondly, it is well-informed and rational, it fills the mind and heart with true notions, with great and elevated views; and ſo it ſets men at an infinite diſtance from thoſe mean, ignorant, and trifling things which the ſuperſtitious are taken up withal. Let us conclude then, that hypocritical and ſuperſtitious men, are ſo far from having too much piety, that they have none at all: if it happens ſometimes, as it certainly does; that men who have a ſound and honeſt heart, are ſomewhat given to an odd kind of devotion,

votion, which in ſome reſpects favours of ſuperſtition; this does not proceed from piety itſelf, but from a defect in thoſe that profeſs it, who may either want knowledge, or force of mind.

IV. Tho' men endeavour to defend corruption, with thoſe maxims I have related; yet as theſe maxims may eaſily be confuted, ſo they are ſometimes forced to acknowledge, that the depravation of the age is great, and that the life of Chriſtians is not agreeable to the rules of their religion. But for all this, they do not give up the cauſe. They betake themſelves to various excuſes by which they think to exempt themſelves from their duty, or at leaſt to leſſen and extenuate the ſin of not obſerving it. Theſe excuſes muſt needs maintain them in ſecurity; they are beſides very common, and even paſs frequently for good and juſt. Therefore I think it may be proper to refute them too, in this chapter. It would be a difficult taſk, to reckon up all the excuſes which are alledged in the behalf of corruption, and to trace out all the doublings and artifices of man's heart, upon this matter. It will be ſufficient to mention thoſe which are moſt general and ordinary.

1. It is cuſtomary to excuſe corruption, by ſaying, *That we are men, and not angels.* This excuſe might be deſtroyed by what has been already ſaid, but yet it may be uſeful to dwell a little upon it. It is ſaid then, *That we are men, and not angels*; and that is a moſt certain truth; but there is no ground to juſtify or excuſe by that the ill lives of Chriſtians. For firſt, that very thing that we are men, obliges us to the practice of virtue, inſtead of exempting us from it. *We are men*, and as ſuch, we have a reaſon which diſtinguiſhes us from brutes, and a conſcience which diſcerns between good and evil; we ought then to live according to reaſon, and the principles of conſcience; and to do that which becomes the nature of man. *We are men*, and by conſequence mortal; we know we are not to live always in this world, and knowing this, we muſt either think of another life, or propoſe to ourſelves no other end, than that of beaſts; which follow their inſtinct while they live, and then die never to live again. *We are men*, but we are not independent, we have a creator and a maſter; and as we are endued beſides with underſtanding, we are to give an account of our actions before his tribunal; it is therefore agreeable to the nature of man, to live like a creature that depends upon God, and that muſt be judged. So that this conſideration, *that we are men*, is ſo far from excuſing, that it condemns corruption.

But it may be ſaid *that we are weak men.* This is very true, our nature is frail, and has beſides a ſtrong byaſs to evil. But God ſpeaks to us as to weak men; he commands us nothing but what is proportioned to that ſtate of imperfection we are in. Beſides, this excuſe does not at all become Chriſtians. To ſay, *we are weak men*, is to ſhew we have but little ſenſe of God's kindneſs towards us. We are not only men, but we are Chriſtians too, and this quality raiſes us above the natural condition of men; it makes us new men and new creatures. Why do we then forget the glory to which God has exalted our nature through Jeſus Chriſt? Why would we ſtill lie under the burden of frail and corrupt nature?

It is further ſaid, *that we are not angels.* But neither is it neceſſary that we ſhould be ſo, to do that which God commands us. When God gives

gives us his laws, he knows he gives them to men; and therefore they are admirably ſuited to our preſent condition in this world. If we were angels, God would give us quite other laws, the goſpel would be aboliſhed, and the world ſhould continue no longer in the ſtate it is in. It is therefore an abſurd imagination, to think that one cannot perform the duties of religion without being of an angelical nature.

Let us then no longer pretend, *That becauſe we are men we are too weak to obſerve the duties which religion preſcribes*; this excuſe charges God with injuſtice, as if he did require from us ſuch things, as are not agreeable with our nature and condition; it is injurious to the goſpel, and to the Chriſtian religion, as well as to the grace of Chriſt, and the power of his ſpirit; it is falſe, ſince the ſcripture declares, that grace regenerates and ſtrengthens us, and that it makes us able to overcome the vitious inclinations of our nature, and to free our ſelves from the dominion of ſin: and laſtly, it is contrary to experience; for thoſe many ſaints and good men, who practiſed the moſt * ſublime and difficult duties of piety, were men as we are, and as the † ſacred writers obſerve, they were ſubject to the ſame infirmities with us, and many of them, perhaps, had not thoſe advantages which we have.

2. It is often alledged as an excuſe, *That no man is perfect, and that every one has his faults.* This is ſaid every day, and ſome pretend with that ſaying, to excuſe every thing. Excuſes for the moſt part have ſomething of truth in them. This propoſition, *That no man is perfect*, is very true in one ſenſe, and altogether falſe in another.

No man certainly is perfect, in the ſtrict ſenſe of that word, or as it imports a full and accompliſhed perfection, free from all defect; ſuch a perfection is to be had no where elſe but in heaven. But there is a perfection commenced, or begun, of which a man redeemed and ſanctified by Jeſus Chriſt, is capable. If it was not ſo: why ſhould Chriſt and his apoſtles exhort us, ‡ *to be perfect?* Why ſhould they tell us, ‖ *that he who is born of God does not ſin?* And that a Chriſtian is § *thoroughly furniſhed to every good work?* If you aſk, who thoſe perfect men are? I anſwer, that they are thoſe who aſpire to perfection, in whom ſin does not reign, who do not allow themſelves in any vicious habit, who ſincerely and honeſtly apply themſelves to holineſs, and have accuſtomed themſelves to practiſe the duties of it with delight. Whoever is arrived at ſuch a ſtate, has attained that perfection which is attainable in this life, and to which Chriſtians are called by the Goſpel; tho' there remain ſtill in him ſome infirmities inſeparable from human nature, and never totally to be rooted out, before he gets to heaven. We cannot be perfect in that firſt and ſtrict ſenſe I have mentioned; but we may be perfect, and God will have us be ſo, in the ſtrict and evangelical ſenſe of that word.

It is therefore a frivolous excuſe in the mouth of corrupt men, to ſay, *That no man is perfect, and that we cannot attain to the perfection, or to the ſtate of the bleſſed in heaven*; for this is to ſhift the queſtion, becauſe that is not the perfection which God requires. We ought not to fix a falſe and abſurd ſenſe upon God's commandments, that we may have a pretence

* James v. 17.
† Heb. xii. 1.
‡ Matth. v. 48. Phil. i. 10. 1 Theſſ. v. 23.
‖ 1 John v. 9.
§ 1 Cor. i. 8. 2 Tim. xi. 21.

tence not to obey them. The queſtion is, whether Chriſtians are not bound to do that which God would have them do, and which they are able to do in this world; this is the perfection to which he calls us.

We may apply very near the ſame anſwer to that other excuſe, *That every body has his faults:* there are faults which do not deſtroy piety; and God is graciouſly pleaſed not to impute ſuch faults to thoſe that fear him; and in this ſenſe, no man is free from faults; but there is another ſort of faults, which ſhould not be called bare faults or defects; thoſe are the vices and paſſions which cannot conſiſt with piety, the great, the reigning, the habitual or deliberate ſins. True Chriſtians are free from ſuch faults, and thoſe who are not free from them, are not true Chriſtians. If this maxim, *That every one has his faults*, is not thus explained; we muſt ſpeak no longer of virtue and vice; for this excuſe will ſerve for all ſins, and acquit every body. If a man is given to ſwearing, if he is revengeful, paſſionate, or falſe, if he commit adultery, it is but ſaying, *Every one has his faults, and no man is perfect.* Such language from a man full of vicious habits is inſufferable. What diſmal conſequences, would not libertines draw from ſuch a principle? We muſt therefore underſtand this propoſition, in the ſenſe, and with thoſe reſtrictions I have obſerved, and then it may be uſeful to comfort good men, but it will never excuſe thoſe who are vicious.

3. Men endeavour to excuſe themſelves, by laying the ſins they commit upon the great number and the force of temptations. *It is very hard*, ſay they, *to avoid ſin, we are ſo many ways drawn into it, temptations are ſo ſtrong and ſo frequent, that we muſt go out of the world, if we would preſerve our innocence.* Sometimes they impute to the devil the ſins which they fall into, and at other times, ſo great is their audacioufneſs, that they throw them upon God and his providence.

All theſe excuſes are trifling, and ſome of them are impious. For, to begin with that which is borrowed from the multitude and ſtrength of temptations; it is unreaſonable to imagine, that the number of temptations is ſo great, that their force is irreſiſtible. Temptations are frequent, I confeſs; but it is an error to think, that there is nothing but ſnares and ſolicitations to ſin in the world. This would give us a ſtrange notion of God, and of his works, and in that caſe man's condition would be very miſerable. It is certain on the other hand, that the opportunities and ſolicitations to good, are very common, eſpecially in relation to Chriſtians, whom an infinite number of objects and motives call back to God, and to their duty. Even temptations themſelves give them occaſions of doing good. God ſupplies them *abundantly with all things neceſſary to life and godlineſs*; as we are told, 2 *Pet.* i. Certainly we are to preſume, that if God permits that men ſhould here meet with temptations and opportunities of undoing themſelves, he offers them on the other hand, many occaſions and inducements to take care of their ſalvation. So that the great number of ſolicitations to good, does already deſtroy the excuſe which is taken from the great number of temptations.

Neither is it more reaſonable to complain of the ſtrength of thoſe temptations. Such a complaint is very unſeemly from Chriſtians, who are appointed to overcome the world, the fleſh, and all other temptations. When all things are well conſidered, it will appear, that it is within

within our ſelves, in our own negligence, and in the perverſeneſs of our wills, that we ought to look for that which makes temptations ſo ſtrong and too hard for us. They have no more ſtrength than we give them. St. *James* has decided this queſtion in ſuch a manner as ſhould ſtop the mouth of thoſe who ſeek the cauſe of evil any where elſe but in their own hearts. * *Every man*, ſays he, *is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and inticed.*

The devil has no more power over us, than temptations have: for he can but tempt us. But yet we are apt to aſcribe to him a kind of omnipotence. According to the vulgar opinion, one would think, that the devil is the author of all the ſins that are committed; that he is every where; and that men are but his inſtruments, which he uſes at pleaſure. If this was true, men were indeed to be pitied, and it would be ſome excuſe to thoſe who live ill. The Scripture teaches us no ſuch thing.

But the higheſt pitch of temerity, is to charge God and Providence with our ſins. Thus ſome men are wont to ſay, *Such a thing comes to paſs becauſe God would have it ſo; and ſuch another thing did not happen becauſe it did not pleaſe God that it ſhould.* When this excuſe is made with relation to ſin, it amounts to the moſt horrid of blaſphemies; it lays upon God all the evil that happens, and makes him the author of it: for either this excuſe ſignifies nothing; or elſe it imports, that God is the cauſe of what happens, and not we. This muſt needs be the meaning of it, becauſe men pretend to excuſe themſelves with ſaying, *God would have it ſo.* In a word, here is no middle way; either the cauſe of ſin is in man, or it is not. If it is in man, he can accuſe no body elſe but himſelf; he cannot clear himſelf by ſaying, God would or would not have it ſo. If the cauſe of ſin be not in man, he is diſcharged, and all the evil lights upon God. It is an aſtoniſhing thing, that men who believe God to be equally holy and juſt, can entertain ſuch thoughts.

4. Another excuſe is often alledged, and it is fetched from common *practice, cuſtom and example.* That which is generally done is thought to be innocent, or at leaſt pardonable. But the greatneſs and the univerſality of corruption excuſe no body: cuſtom and example cannot make any thing lawful which is bad. Where there is an expreſs law, it is to no purpoſe to plead practice to the contrary. Cuſtom or numbers exempt no man from doing that which God commands, and will never protect him at the day of judgment. Cuſtom and example are ſo far from excuſing vice, that on the contrary, this very thing that the cuſtom is bad, ought to make men ſenſible how neceſſary it is to ſet about a good reformation.

5. But if men think that example and cuſtom excuſe them, they fancy themſelves yet much more excuſable, when they can alledge the examples and the ſins of good men. The libertines triumph here. *To what purpoſe is it*, ſay they, *to recommend holineſs ſo ſtrictly, and to enforce it with ſuch ſevere penalties, when we ſee many good men follow a courſe quite oppoſite to thoſe maxims, and to that exact morality?* But they ought to conſider that it is extream hard, or rather impoſſible, to know certainly, whether a man is truly a good man or not. We cannot be aſſured of this, unleſs we knew men's hearts, which belongs only to God. This reflection

* 1 James i. 14.

reflection does already defeat the excuse, which is borrowed from the sins of good men. We frequently imagine the person who sins to be a good man, when he is but an hypocrite, or an atheist. Indeed piety and charity require, that we should think the best of our neighbours, especially of those in whom the marks of solid piety and virtue appear; but neither charity nor piety obliges us to confound vice with godliness, or to call evil good. Sin is sin, and ought to be condemned wherever we meet with it, and more particularly in those, who pass for better men than others. When men who seem to be pious fall into such sins as are inconsistent with regeneration; we ought to think, that those men either give the lye to their character, and are not what we took them for; and then we may apply to them the words of *Ezekiel*, chap. xxxiii. v. 18. *When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby*; or else we must think, that tho' they have some piety, it is but weak as yet, so that they are not what they appear to be; but however, we ought to be positive in this, That the examples and the sins of others, will excuse no man in the sight of God.

6. Another very common evasion, by which men endeavour to excuse the neglect and omission of their duty, is *that they do not profess devotion and piety*. This is the ordinary plea of men of business, of worldlings, of young people, of courtiers, of military men, and of a great many besides in all conditions. *We do not pretend to devotion*, they cry, *we are ingaged in the world*. And with this shift, they not only think themselves excusable for neglecting piety; but they fancy they have a right to neglect it, and that they do a great deal, if they observe some of the external duties of it. One can hardly believe, that these persons are in earnest, when they make such an excuse. It astonishes a man to find Christians, who have the confidence to say, That piety is not their business, that they are of another profession, and that they are not at leisure to be devout.

I fancy, there are two things which deceive those who alledge this excuse. 1. That they do not well understand what devotion is; they look upon it as a very austere and singular way of living; from whence they conclude, that but few people are able to apply themselves to it, and so they turn it over to the clergy, to women, or to those who have much leisure. I have observed already the falseness of this prejudice, and shewed that piety is neither singular nor austere. 2. The other cause of their error seems to be this; that they do not consider, that piety is every bodies business, and that such is the nature of it, that it may be practised by all men. Not but that secular occupations and callings, do frequently obstruct piety, and ingage men in vice; and therefore a Christian should never be so taken up with the affairs of this life, as thereby to disable himself from performing the duties of Christianity. But after all, a man may live like a good Christian in any lawful calling; and in that sense properly we are to understand the words of St. *Paul*, * *That the grace of God which brings salvation, has appeared unto all men, teaching them to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.*

Do those who plead it for an excuse, *that they do not profess devotion*, imagine, that there are two ways to go to heaven, the one for devout, and

* Tit. ii. 11.

and the other for worldly men; the one narrow, and the other broad? Do they think that the commandments of God do not concern all men, that there is reſpect of perſons with God, or that he diſpenſes with his own laws? How can they prove theſe diſtinctions? Are not we all Chriſtians? Have we not all been baptized? Does not God give us all the ſame laws? Or have ſome more reaſon to love God than others? And ought not the great concern of our ſalvation to be equally dear to us all?

I grant, that thoſe who have greater opportunities, and more leiſure than others; ought to make uſe of theſe advantages: but I maintain at the ſame time; That none ſtand in greater need of piety, than thoſe who ſay, *We are ingaged in the world, we do not pretend to devotion.* It is becauſe they are not devout, that their condition is very ſad; and the more they are ingaged in the world, the greater are the temptations and diſtractions to which they are liable: now he that is expoſed to a ſtorm, had need take more care than he who enjoys a calm.

Theſe are the principal maxims and ſentiments, which are made uſe of to authoriſe corruption. Whoever takes notice of what is ſaid and done in the world, muſt needs acknowledge that theſe and the like maxims are vented abroad every day; ſo that in order to obſtruct the progreſs of corruption, it is abſolutely neceſſary to undeceive men, in reference to theſe ſentiments, and to oppoſe that criminal boldneſs, which ſhamefully corrupts the truths of religion, and turns impieties into religious maxims, and articles of faith.

CAUSE IV.

The Abuſe of Holy Scripture.

IT is a daring piece of confidence to authorize Corruption with maxims borrowed from religion; but it is the laſt degree of audaciouſneſs and impiety, to turn the holy Scripture to ſuch a ſcandalous uſe, and to ſeek in that divine Book pretences and apologies for vice; and yet the extravagance and temerity of many bad Chriſtians come up to this pitch. Several declarations of the word of God are made by them as many maxims, under which they think to ſhelter themſelves: and if we believe them, there is nothing either in their practice or opinions, but what is agreeable to the will and intentions of God himſelf. This abuſe of the Scripture, I deſign to ſhew, in this chapter, to be one of the cauſes of corruption; and it cannot be too ſeriouſly conſidered.

The paſſages of Scripture which are abuſed to this purpoſe, may be reduced to theſe four heads. The *Firſt* comprehends the places which are brought againſt the neceſſity of good-works. Under the *Second*, we will examine thoſe declarations of Scripture, by which ſome endeavour to prove, that all men, without exception, are in a ſtate of corruption which

which subjects them to sin. In the *Third* place, we shall answer the arguments drawn from the examples of those saints, whose sins are recorded in Scripture. And *lastly*, we shall make some reflections upon those Scriptures, in which the divine Mercy is promised to the greatest sinners.

There are divers passages in Scripture, which being ill understood, lead many into this persuasion, That good-works are not of absolute necessity. And first, nothing is more confidently alledged to this purpose, then what we read in many places; * *That we are justified by faith, and not by our works.* No doctrine is more clearly and expressly delivered in the Gospel, than that of justification by faith. But it is a perverting of this doctrine to conclude from it, that salvation may be obtained without good-works. This conclusion must needs be false, since the Gospel enjoins good-works as a necessary condition in order to salvation. St. *Paul* tells us, that † *without holiness no man shall see God.* And does not that import, that none shall be saved without holiness and good-works? The same apostle teaches us, that at the day of judgment, when men shall be admitted into, or excluded from heaven; God will have a regard to their works, to the good or evil which they shall have done. ‡ *God will render to every man according to his works.* ‖ *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that we may receive according to what we have done, whether good or bad.* This is very positive, and therefore since their can be no contradiction in Scripture, here is enough already to convince us, that the doctrine of justification by faith, has nothing in it which destroys the necessity of good-works.

But it will appear yet less difficult to reconcile these two doctrines; if we suppose that which no man can reasonably contest, namely, That when the Scripture says, that *faith* is sufficient to salvation, we are to understand by the word *faith* in this proposition: *that true faith* which the Gospel requires. Now if we ask, What that faith is, and by what marks may it be known? All the Apostles will unanimously tell us, That true faith produces a holy life, and that it discovers it self by all manner of good-works. They assign good-works as the essential mark and character, that distinguishes a saving from an hypocritical faith. By that very thing therefore that the Gospel requires faith, it does likewise require good-works, since faith cannot be without works. And by consequence the opinion of those, who fancy that faith is sufficient without works, is evidently absurd, and contrary to the Gospel, and to the nature of faith it self.

But to set this matter still in a clearer light; it is necessary to take notice here of two mistakes, which men are apt to run into when they speak of faith and good-works. The first is, that they separate faith from works; they look upon faith as a thing quite different from works, and which supplies the want of them; or rather they oppose faith to works, as if these two things were contrary to each other. A corrupt man will say, *I confess that I have not good works, but however I have faith.*

Those who speak thus, suppose that they may have faith tho' they have not works; but St. *James* has directly confuted this imagination; *What*

* Rom. iii. 28. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ Rom. ii. 6. ‖ 2 Cor. v. 10.

**What does it profit, my Brethren, though a man ſay he has faith and have not works? Can faith ſave him? If faith have not works, it is dead, being alone.*

Who can after this ſeparate ſaving faith from good-works? Can we ſeparate that from faith, which God has declared to be inſeparable from it? It ſhews that men are ſtrangely blinded with ignorance and prejudice, when at this time of day we are fain to prove things ſo plain and unqueſtionable.

The ſecond illuſion is, that men place faith in confidence alone, and many define it by that. They fancy that to have faith, is nothing elſe but to believe that God is merciful, and to rely upon the merits of Chriſt; becauſe faith embraces the promiſes of the Goſpel, the natural effect of which promiſe is to fill the heart with aſſurance and tranquillity. It is beyond all doubt, that for the moſt part true faith is attended with confidence. But confidence is not the whole of faith; and I cannot imagine what part of God's word countenances that notion, which places the eſſence of faith in confidence alone.

The faith which the Goſpel ſpeaks of, conſiſts in believing that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; in embracing his doctrine as true, and in making profeſſion of it, in doing his commandments, and hoping for ſalvation from him. But the reſolving all faith and religion into acts of confidence, is the moſt extravagant conceit that can enter into a man's head. If this notion was true, it would follow from it, that in order to be ſaved, it is enough for a man to believe that he ſhall be ſaved. Which is the ſame thing as to ſay, That whoever would have a right to confide in God, needs do no more in order to that, than actually to truſt in him; and that is a moſt ridiculous thought, which turns all religion into a ſtrong fancy. Before we believe a thing we ought to know why we ſhould believe it, and have good reaſon and ſolid grounds for our belief. Before we truſt in God, we ought to ſatisfy our ſelves that we have a right to confide in him: for can a man be ſaved only becauſe without any ground or reaſon he fancies that he ſhall? We ought not to rely upon God but according to his promiſe. Now God has promiſed nothing to thoſe who live and are hardened in ſin; far from promiſing any thing to them, he threatens them with inevitable ruin. What claim or title then can an obdurate ſinner have to the mercy of God? What confidence can he repoſe in God's promiſes, as long as he continues impenitent? None at all, except we ſuppoſe in God a general decree, to ſave indifferently all ſorts of perſons.

It muſt not be ſaid, That theſe conſiderations are apt to alarm and diſturb the peace of men's conſciences; for they will alarm none of thoſe who are animated with true faith and ſincere piety. And as to others; we do them a great piece of ſervice, when we awaken and terrify them out of that falſe quiet, into which a groundleſs confidence has betrayed them. On the other hand, it is a dangerous thing to teach, That confidence is the moſt eſſential thing to faith; for by this we may alarm ſome good men, who either through melancholy or want of inſtruction, are deſtitute of confidence and inward peace. And it has certainly happened,

* James ii. 14, 17.

ed, that ſeveral pious perſons are fallen into black thoughts and ſad ſcruples concerning their ſalvation, and that they have in ſome meaſure deſponded, becauſe they did not find confidence, and a ſenſe of the love of God in themſelves.

From all theſe reflections it does evidently appear, that faith never ought, nor can be ſeparated from good-works; and that Chriſtians are as much obliged to apply themſelves to good-works, as they are to believe, and to have faith.

But now if it be aſked, Why St. *Paul* then oppoſes faith to works, and why he excludes works, when he treats of juſtification? I anſwer, That the Apoſtle aims at two things by this. His deſign is to ſhew, 1. That works are not the cauſe and foundation of men's ſalvation; but that it flows from the pure mercy of God through Jeſus Chriſt. This he proves with reſpect both to the Heathens and the *Jews*, in the firſt chapters of his epiſtle to the *Romans*. But he did not mean to ſay, That good-works are not neceſſary under the covenant of grace. His expreſſions are too clear to leave the leaſt room for any doubt about this matter: to reject the meritoriouſneſs of good-works is one thing, and to deny their neceſſity is another. But 2*dly*. becauſe it may be objected, that St. *Paul* does intirely exclude works, and that he uſes expreſſions which imply, that Chriſtians are no longer obliged to the practice of them, and that they have no influence on men's ſalvation either as cauſes or conditions; but on the contrary, are oppoſed to faith: therefore I add, That he ſpeaks thus with relation to the works of the ceremonial law, and eſpecially to circumciſion. There were many in St. *Paul*'s time, who aſſerted, that Chriſtians were bound to obſerve thoſe legal ordinances. It was about this queſtion that the Apoſtles met at *Jeruſalem*, and determined, **That Chriſtians are juſtified by faith only, and that the yoke of Moſaical ordinances ought not to be laid upon them.* The ſame controverſy is handled by St. *Paul*, in his epiſtle to the *Galatians*, where giving an account of his diſpute with St. *Peter*, and of his reproving him for his too great compliance with the *Jews*; he affirms, *That we are juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law.*

Why has not that difference been obſerved which St. *Paul* makes about works? When he ſpeaks of the works of the Moſaical law, he calls them *the works of the law*, or barely *works*; but when he treats of the works which the Goſpel preſcribes, he calls them *good-works*; becauſe they are really good, holy and profitable in their own nature; but this title of *good-works*, is never beſtowed upon the works of the ceremonial law, which conſidered in themſelves had nothing of goodneſs or holineſs in them. In a word, *good-works* in St. *Paul*'s ſtyle, are quite another thing than barely *works*, or the *works of the law*.

If this had been conſidered, ſuch great pains needed not to have been taken, to make † St. *Paul* agree with St. *James*. ‡ St. *Paul* ſays, *That man is juſtified by faith without the works of the law*; ‖ and St. *James*, *That man is juſtified by works, and not by faith only*. There is no contradiction between theſe two Apoſtles. Both follow one hypotheſis, and argue upon

* Acts xv. † Rom. iii. 28. ‡ Gal. ii. 16. ‖ James ii. 24.

the ſame principles. St. *Paul* diſputing againſt the *Jews*, who would tye Chriſtians to the obſervance of the works of the Moſaical law; affirms, That faith in Chriſt is ſufficient, provided it brings forth good-works; and that it is not neceſſary to obſerve the Moſaical rites. St. *James* diſputing againſt Hereticks, who pretended that faith did ſave without good-works, and ſo did intirely ruin our Saviour's morals; declares, that faith which does not produce good-works, is not ſufficient to ſalvation. Is not this the ſame doctrine with St. *Paul*'s? But inſtead of reconciling theſe two Apoſtles, ſome people find here great difficulties. They do not reconcile St. *James* with St. *Paul*, but they rather refute St. *James* by St. *Paul*. St. *James* is expounded with great caution; as if he had gone too far by ſaying, *That man is juſtified by works, and not by faith only*. This propoſition is ſoftned as much as poſſible, it is excuſed rather than explained; but as for what St. *Paul* ſays, *That faith alone juſtifies without works*, it is taken in the utmoſt ſtrictneſs; ſo that all is aſcribed to faith, and nothing to good-works. Nay, faith is ſet in oppoſition to good-works, and God to God himſelf; the paſſages of Scripture which ſpeak of faith being brought out againſt thoſe which relate to works. *It is true*, ſay ſome, *the Scripture ſays, that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God*; but it is likewiſe written, *That we are not juſtified by our works, but only by faith*. And by this way of reaſoning, men raiſe themſelves above the reproaches and accuſations of their own conſciences. I ſay it once more; this is to attack and confute the word of God by it ſelf, and to charge the Holy Ghoſt with ſelf-contradiction. For in ſhort, if a man can be juſtified without good-works, he can be ſaved without them too; ſince the being juſtified is the ſame thing with the being ſaved: now if a man can be ſaved without good-works, he may ſee the face of God without holineſs; which is directly contrary to what St. *Paul* tells us, * *That without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

2. A great many people imagine, that it is one of the privileges of Chriſtians, not to be tyed to the obſervation of God's law as the *Jews* were; ſome miſtaken places give occaſion to that error, and particularly this; † *We are no more under the law but under grace*. Theſe words are thus interpreted. *The law did preſcribe works, but the Goſpel requires only faith; the law did threaten, but the Goſpel ſpeaks only of grace and pardon. So that to require works, at this time of day, is to bring back the diſpenſation of the law*. There is ſomething of truth in this reaſoning; but thoſe who make uſe of it to free themſelves from the obſervation of God's commandments, do very little underſtand either what the law or the Goſpel is, and wherein theſe two diſpenſations differ. It is certain, that the law was a diſpenſation of ſeverity; it did not propoſe to men remiſſion of ſins and ſalvation as the Goſpel does. The law had not that power and efficacy to ſanctify men, which grace has. The law laid upon the *Jews*, a great many obligations which were not only burdenſome and painful; but which beſides had no intrinſecal holineſs in them; and thoſe duties were enjoyned under a curſe. The law it ſelf was a time of ſeverity and malediction, in reſpect to all the nations of the earth, ſince all the while that œconomy did ſubſiſt, they were excluded from

* Heb. xii. 14. † Rom. vi. 14.

from the covenant which God had made with the *Jews*. In theſe ſeveral regards, we are not under the law, but under grace.

But if from this, that we are not under the law, we ſhould infer, that we are no longer bound to do what is juſt; this inference would overturn the whole Goſpel, and transform religion into libertiniſm. If becauſe we are under grace we ought to ſpeak no more of works; why ſhould the Goſpel preſcribe works, and the ſame works which the law enjoyned, excepting only the ceremonies? Why ſhould this Goſpel call us to a holineſs, which exceeds that of the *Jews*, and enforce this obligation, with more terrible threatnings, than thoſe of the law? Why did our Saviour, *John* the Baptiſt and the Apoſtles, preach up repentance, and enter upon their miniſtry with theſe words, * *Repent ye?* According to the hypotheſis of theſe men, they ſhould have ſpoken to them after this manner, *This is the time of grace, the law is paſt, and the covenant of works is aboliſhed; therefore fear nothing, let not your ſins trouble you, for ſalvation is promiſed to all mankind.* Whence comes it to paſs that our ‖ Saviour ſpeaks only of works, in his ſermon upon the mount; or that St. *Paul* declares, that the natural intention and the proper effect of grace, is *to teach men to live according to the rules of temperance, juſtice, and godlineſs?* Muſt we ſay, that God is altered, that he does not love holineſs ſo much now, as he did heretofore; or that ſin is become leſs odious to him, ſince it was expiated by the death of his Son? *But* (it is ſaid) *we are no more under the law.* What, are Chriſtians then a lawleſs people? On the contrary we are under the law, I mean under the law of Chriſt, under ‡ *the law of the ſpirit of life, which makes us free from the law of ſin and death.*

But let us hear St. *Paul* himſelf, in what ſenſe and reſpect does he ſay, *That we are no more under the law but under grace?* He ſays this, preciſely to ſhew, that we ought to live no longer in ſin. Theſe are his own words, † *What then? Shall we ſin becauſe we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.* On the contrary, *ſin ſhall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace; you were formerly the ſervants of ſin, but now being made free from ſin, and become the ſervants of God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs.* We need but read the ſequel of his diſcourſe to ſee how he inveighs againſt thoſe, who turned the grace of the Goſpel into a pretence to live in ſin.

Before I leave this matter, I ſhall take notice of two errors, which are pretty common. The firſt is, the applying to Chriſtians at this day, all thoſe things which were ſpoken of old by the Apoſtles, to the converted *Jews*. It is ſaid, *That we are no more under the law*; and Chriſtians are often exhorted to bleſs God for being no longer under the curſe of the law, and the yoke of *Moſes*. And upon this a great many oppoſitions are obſerved betwixt the law and the Goſpel. For my part, I do not think thoſe exhortations and oppoſitions, ſo very proper to be inſiſted on, when we are ſpeaking to men who never were *Jews*; unleſs we do it with a deſign to ſhew the excellency of the Goſpel covenant, above that of the law, and the advantages of Chriſtians above *Jews*. For after all, the law was given only to the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* were ne-

* Matth. iii. 2. & iv. 17. ‖ Matth. v. 6, 7. ‡ Rom. viii. 2.
† Rom. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

ver ſubjected to the ceremonies or the curſe of it, as the *Jews* were. Why ſhould we then ſay to people who never were under the law, *You are no more under the law?* The Apoſtles indeed ſpoke in that manner to the converted *Jews*; but as to thoſe who were formerly *Pagans*, it would be more fitting to tell them; * *You have been converted from idols to the living God, Remember that ye were in times paſt Gentiles without hope, and without God in the world; and therefore live no longer like Heathens.* It is a great fault not to expound the Scripture according to the true ſcope of it, and to apply all that it contains, to all ſorts of perſons without diſtinction.

The other error is of greater conſequence. People fancy, that becauſe we are not under the law, which was a covenant of rigor, we are now to ſpeak of nothing elſe to men, but of grace and promiſes, and that it is contrary to the ſpirit of the Goſpel, to threaten and to denounce curſes againſt ſinners. It has been ſaid already, in what ſenſe the law was a covenant of rigor, in oppoſition to the covenant of grace; but the Goſpel has alſo its curſes, and they are much more terrible than thoſe of the law. The Goſpel ſpeaks of the future puniſhments of another life, in much clearer and ſtronger expreſſions, than the law does. To be convinced of this, we need but reflect upon that oppoſition which St. *Paul* makes between the law and the Goſpel, in the tenth chapter to the *Hebrews*, *He that deſpiſed Moſes's law died without mercy, under two or three witneſſes; of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified an unholy thing, and has done deſpight unto the ſpirit of grace? We know him that has ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompenſe, ſaith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God.*

3. The Libertines do likewiſe abuſe what St. *Paul* ſays in the epiſtle to the † *Galatians* concerning Chriſtian liberty; when he declares that Chriſtians *are freed from the bondage of the law*, when he exhorts them, *to ſtand faſt in that liberty*, and proteſts, *that Chriſt profiteth nothing to thoſe, who would be juſtified by the law.* But a man may ſee with half an eye, that the Apoſtle meant only, that Chriſtians are no longer bound to obſerve circumciſion, and the other ceremonies of the law of *Moſes*. That St. *Paul* has no other view or deſign but this, will plainly appear to every one who will read the whole epiſtle, and particularly the ſecond chapter of it.

In the V chapter we find two things which are deciſive in this matter. 1. St. *Paul* ſpeaks there expreſly of circumciſion. ‡ *Behold I Paul ſay unto you, that if you be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing; for I teſtifie again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Chriſt is become of none effect unto you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.* 2. It is very obſervable, with what circumſpection the Apoſtle delivers himſelf, leſt his doctrine ſhould be wreſted to favour licentiouſneſs; after he had ſaid, ‖ *You are called unto liberty*, he adds immediately, *only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh.* He explains what

* Theſſ. i. 9. Epheſ. ii. 12. & iv. 17. † Gal. v. 1.
‡ Gal. v. 2, 3, 4. ‖ Ver. 13.

what he means by living after the fleſh, by making an enumeration, of thoſe ſins which the fleſh produces, and which exclude men from the kingdom of heaven. He exhorts men to live after the ſpirit, and to practiſe the Chriſtian virtues. In the IV chapter, he purſues the ſame exhortations, and he ends the epiſtle with theſe remarkable words, which contain the ſum of his doctrine; * *For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature:* that is to ſay, Whether a man be a Jew or a Heathen, it matters not, ſo he believes in Jeſus Chriſt, and obſerves God's commandments; ‖ *Peace and mercy be on them all who walk after this rule.* Is there any thing plainer than this doctrine? And yet how clear ſoever it may be, Chriſtian liberty is alledged to ſet men free from the obligation to keep God's commandments. All that St. *Paul* ſays againſt circumciſion and the ceremonies of the law, is by an enormous blaſphemy, turned againſt the holy commandments of the Son of God. Can any thing more odious or prophane be imagined, than the perverting of the Holy Scripture at this rate?

4. Thoſe who plead on the ſide of corruption, are wont to object againſt what is ſaid in behalf of holineſs, this ſentence of *Solomon's*, ‡ *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyſelf over-wiſe.* And what inferences do they not draw from thence? They conclude from this place, That a man ought not to pretend ſo much to holineſs, or to ſet up for a good man, and that in all things a mediocrity is beſt. One may eaſily apprehend that ſuch ſentiments muſt needs introduce licentiouſneſs; eſpecially, when they are thought to be ſupported by a Divine authority.

But let us ſee whether or no, ſuch conceits can be founded upon this ſentence of *Solomon's*. I ſhall aſk in the firſt place, Whether it is poſſible for a man to be too juſt or too wiſe, and whether there can be a vicious exceſs in righteouſneſs or wiſdom? If a man may be over righteous, he may likewiſe love God too much; for to be righteous, and to love God is the ſame thing. Now God requires that we ſhould love him with all our heart, and conſequently that we ſhould be as righteous, as it is poſſible for us to be. But far from being over-righteous, we can never be righteous enough. And if we can never be righteous enough, is there any occaſion to exhort us, that we ſhould not be over-righteous? I wiſh men had at leaſt that reverence for the Scripture, as not to make it ſpeak abſurdities.

I know the ordinary evaſion: vicious men will ſay, that when piety runs to exceſs, it leads to ſuperſtition or pride, and becomes troubleſome and ridiculous. Every body ſays that, but without reaſon. I have refuted that opinion, that ſhewed that true piety never degenerates into ſuperſtition, or pride, and that devout men who are ſuperſtitious, or troubleſome, have but a falſe devotion, or a miſguided zeal.

This may direct us to the true meaning of the ſentence in queſtion; *Solomon* does not ſpeak here of true juſtice and wiſdom. For whether he may have an eye here upon ſuperſtitious or hypocritical perſons whoſe righteouſneſs is but imaginary, which ſenſe is adopted by many interpreters, or whether he ſpeaks of thoſe who exerciſe juſtice with too much

 ſeverity,

* Chap. vi. 15. ‖ Ver. 16. ‡ Eccleſ. vii. 16.

ſeverity, as ſome think; or whether as it is conceived by others, he gives this advice to buſy and preſumptuous people, who meddle in things which do not concern them, and fancy themſelves able to determine all matters; however, it is plain, that *Solomon* does not ſpeak here of good men, who exactly follow the rules of true juſtice and wiſdom. If we ſtick to the laſt of theſe three expoſitions, which ſeems to agree beſt with *Solomon*'s deſign; then the meaning of this place is clear and rational, and has nothing in it contrary to piety; whereas the ſenſe which is put upon theſe words by the Libertines, is both abſurd and impious.

Thoſe who would either juſtify or excuſe corruption; uſe to object in the ſecond place, That ſince the Scripture teaches that all men, and even good men are deeply engaged in corruption: it muſt follow from thence, that holineſs and good-works are not ſo very neceſſary, and that the practice of theſe is impoſſible. Now to prove this univerſal corruption of all men, they bring ſeveral declarations from Scripture, and this among the reſt, *There is not one that doeth good, no not one*, &c. *Pſal.* 14. *Rom.* 3.

If their meaning in citing theſe words, was only to ſhew, that there is no man altogether free from ſin; and if it was granted on the other hand, that good men do not ſin in the ſame manner that the wicked do; I would not quarrel much about this interpretation, though not altogether exact or agreeable to the ſcope of *David* in the 19*th Pſalm*. But there is another deſign in it, which is to infer from theſe words, that men differ very little from one another, that they are all guilty of many great ſins, and that none do, or can practiſe the duties of holineſs. In a word, this is intended for the apology of corruption, and to ſilence thoſe who oppoſe it.

If what *David* ſays in this place is to be ſtrictly underſtood, it will follow, that there is not one good man upon earth; that all men are perverted, that they are all become abominable by their ſins, and that there is not one ſingle perſon that is juſt, or that fears God. But this conſequence raiſes horror, it is contrary to truth and experience, and to what the Scripture declares in a thouſand places, where it ſpeaks of good men, and diſtinguiſhes them from the wicked. Nay, this conſequence may be deſtroyed from what we read in that very *Pſalm*, which mentions the juſt who are protected by God, and the wicked who perſecute them. This complaint of *David*, muſt therefore be underſtood with ſome reſtrictions.

By reading the XIV *Pſalm*, we may perceive that *David* intends to deſcribe in it, the extreme corruption of men in his time. There he draws the picture of impiety and Atheiſm, and ſpeaks of *theſe fools, who ſay in their hearts that there is no God*, and whoſe life is a continued chain of ſins. It muſt be obſerved in the next place, that when St. *Paul* cites theſe words out of the XIV *Pſalm* in the epiſtle to the *Romans*, chap. III. he does it with a deſign to ſhew, that the *Jews* were not much better than the Heathens, and that they had as much need of a Saviour. * *What then, are we better than they? No in no wiſe, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under ſin.* This is the aſſertion which St. *Paul* maintains, and which he proves from that

* Rom. iii. 9.

that complaint which *David* made of old, ‡ *There is not one that does good*, &c. From whence he concludes, *that all mouths muſt be ſtopped, and that all the world is become guilty before God*; ſo that the law of *Moſes* could neither juſtify nor ſanctify the *Jews*. But he teaches at the ſame time, that Chriſt was come to reſcue men out of that miſerable condition. And it were a ſtrange thing if we muſt ſtill ſay of Chriſtians, *That there is none that does good, no not one.*

2. This anſwer is to be applied to that place in the *Epheſians*, where it is ſaid, ‖ *That we are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, for to the ſame end theſe words are quoted. I do not deny but all men abſtracting from the Divine grace, are to be conſidered as dead in their ſins. That is St. *Paul*'s meaning in that place; he ſpeaks here of the natural ſtate of men, and particularly of Heathens; which was a ſtate of corruption and death, in which they had periſhed had not God taken pity upon them. But the Apoſtle intends to make the *Epheſians* ſenſible of that unparallel'd mercy of God by which they were converted to Chriſtianity, being but poor Heathens before, who were dead in their ſins, and obnoxious to the wrath of God. He does not ſay to them, *you are dead in your ſins*; it is a falſifying the text to cite it ſo, and to ſay, *we are dead in our ſins*; but *you were dead*, he ſpeaks of the times paſt when they were Heathens; * *Among whom*, ſays he, ſpeaking of the *Jews*, *we had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind*, but now, he adds, *God has quickned us together with Chriſt*; *both you that were Heathens, and we that were Jews, are raiſed again from this ſpiritual death by virtue of God's great mercy.* This is the true meaning of that place, which gives us a lively idea of men's natural corruption, and of that happy ſtate to which Chriſt has exalted them. I do not deny but that many Chriſtians are ſtill in the ſame condition with Heathens, or very near it, being dead in their ſins, and following the courſe of this world; but this can be ſaid only of bad Chriſtians, and not of thoſe who have felt the divine and ſanctifying virtue of the Chriſtian religion.

3. It will be further ſaid, That we muſt needs acknowledge, that all men without exception are ſinners, becauſe that is St. *John*'s doctrine, † *If we ſay that we have no ſin we deceive ourſelves.* That is a truth which no man denies, becauſe it is too evident both from Scripture and experience. But we muſt take care to underſtand this propoſition aright, *that all men are ſinners*, and that we explain it ſo, as that it may comport with that juſt difference we are to make between good and bad men; elſe under a pretence that all men are ſinners, the diſtinction between virtue and vice will be taken away. It is fit to remark upon this occaſion, that the Scripture does not give the name of *ſinners* to all men, but only to the wicked and impious, this may be ſeen in the whole book of *Pſalms*. When we ſay then, that we are all poor ſinners, we muſt know in what ſenſe we ſay it.

As to theſe words, *If we ſay that we have no ſin we deceive ourſelves.* It is viſible that St. *John* ſays this upon two accounts, which relate to two ſorts of ſins, into which men may fall. Firſt there are great ſins, there

‡ V. 19.
* Epheſ. ii. 3. & 5, &c.
‖ Epheſ. ii. 1.
† 1 John i. 8.

there is that corruption in which men lived before their converſion. In this regard St. *John* might ſay to thoſe he writes to, who were new converted Chriſtians, that they were all ſinners, meaning, that they had all been ſo; for indeed both *Gentiles* and *Jews* had been extreamly corrupt. Secondly, There are ſins, into which thoſe whoſe regeneration is not yet perfect, may fall; as there are infirmities from which the moſt regenerate men, are not free. In this ſenſe all men are ſinners, and the Chriſtians to whom St. *John* directs his epiſtle, were all ſinners alſo, tho' already converted. But the queſtion is, Whether a true Chriſtian ſins like other men, and whether he who is a *ſinner*, taking that word according to the ordinary uſe of Scripture, that is to ſay, one in whom ſin reigns, is a true Chriſtian? That can never be ſaid. To this purpoſe we may hear St. *John* himſelf in the III chapter of the ſame epiſtle; where he expreſly tells us, *That he who is born of God does not commit ſin, that whoever ſinneth is of the Devil, and that by this we may know the children of God and the children of the Devil.* Are not theſe words very plain? Who can have the confidence after this, to excuſe corruption by ſaying, *we are all ſinners?* But yet it is not only ſaid that we are all ſinners by theſe men, but beſides, that we are all great wretched and abominable ſinners. It is no wonder that men who have ſuch ſentiments, ſhould be ſo corrupt.

4. But to this, there is a reply at hand, to ſhew that the juſteſt men are guilty of very frequent ſins, and it is taken from theſe words, *The juſt man ſins ſeven times a day.* I might let this alone, becauſe I am engaged only to anſwer thoſe places of Scripture which are wreſted into an ill ſenſe about this matter. And this, that *the juſt man ſins ſeven times a day*, is no where to be found in the Bible. Thoſe who quote theſe words as if they were Scripture; will pretend no doubt, that they are contained in *Prov.* xxiv. 16. But there is nothing like this in the ſacred text. Theſe are the words of *Solomon*, *A juſt man falleth ſeven times, and riſeth up again: but the wicked ſhall fall into miſchief.* *Solomon* ſpeaks of the frequent afflictions of good men, and particularly of the ill uſage they meet with from wicked men. In the 15 verſe he addreſſes himſelf to the wicked, and tells them, that it is in vain for them, to lay wait for, and to perſecute the juſt, for, adds he, *a juſt man falleth ſeven times, and riſeth up again, but the wicked ſhall fall into miſchief and periſh.* The meaning is, that God takes care of the juſt, and that if he permits that they ſhould fall into many calamities, he does likewiſe deliver them. This is aſſerted almoſt in the ſame words, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 24. *Though the juſt fall he ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* To the ſame purpoſe we are told, *Job* v. 19. *He ſhall deliver thee in ſix troubles, yea in ſeven there ſhall no evil touch thee:* this admits of no difficulty, and all interpreters are agreed about it. And yet for all that, as men are apt to entertain every thing which excuſes corruption; this proverb, *That the juſt man ſins ſeven times a day*, prevails and paſſes for an article of faith. Is it not a lamentable thing, that men ſhould be thus obſtinately bent to wreſt the Scripture, into a ſenſe favourable to corruption, and that they ſhould dare to falſify it at this rate?

There are many falſifyings in the way of citing this paſſage. 1. Whereas *Solomon* ſays only *the juſt*, he is made to ſay *the juſteſt man*, to give

give the greater force and extent to this ſentence, to debaſe piety the more, and to inſinuate, that the beſt and holieſt men are great ſinners. 2. *Solomon* is made to ſay, that *the juſt ſins*, but he does not ſay that, he ſays only that *the juſt falls*. I know that to *fall*, ſignifies ſometimes to *ſin*, but *falling* denotes likewiſe very frequently, *to be afflicted*, and a man is blind who does not ſee, that in this text, the word *fall* is uſed in this ſecond ſenſe. The 17 verſe which comes immediately after that which we are now examining, proves it beyond exception, *Rejoyce not when thy enemy falleth*, &c. Beſides thoſe who are acquainted with the ſacred ſtyle, know, that it does not uſually expreſs the ſins of infirmity, to which the juſt are ſubject, by the word *fall*, that word importing commonly, the fall of wicked men. 3. *Solomon* is made to ſay, *That the juſteſt man ſins ſeven times a day*. This is another falſifying, an addition to the text, which is of no ſmall conſequence. *Seven times a day*, is not in the text, there is only *ſeven times*. Every body knows that ſeven times ſignifies, many times. And ſo the meaning would be, that the juſt do nothing elſe but tranſgreſs; that many times a day he falls into ſin. But who does not ſee, that this would be the deſcription of a man in whom ſin reigns, and who is habitually engaged in it, and not the character of a good man? I do not ſay, but that juſt men have their weak ſides, and fall ſometimes into ſin; this happens more or leſs according to the degree of their regeneration; but it is impious to ſay, that their life is ſpent in continual ſins, and that they offend God at every foot; and yet this is what men would eſtabliſh from this maxim, *That the juſteſt man ſins ſeven times a day*. Thoſe who have a mind to quote the Scripture, ſhould neither add to, nor diminiſh from it; they ſhould not alter the words, nor divide ſentences from what goes before and what follows; for otherwiſe there is no abſurdity nor impiety, which may not be proved from the word of God.

5. But our adverſaries will ſay, Whether that place is alledged right or wrong, it does not matter much, ſince there are others which ſay the ſame thing in ſtronger expreſſions. Does not St. *Paul* ſay, *Rom.* vii. * *I am carnal, ſold under ſin, for in me dwelleth no good thing: for that which I do, I allow not: and what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that do I. I ſee a law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* If St. *Paul* himſelf ſpeaks after this manner, who can deny, that the greateſt ſaints fall into very heinous ſins, and have ſtill a large ſtock of corruption in them?

Thoſe who draw this inference from the words of St. *Paul*, make him ſpeak that which is quite contrary to his thoughts. He is ſo far from ſaying any thing that favours the cauſe of ſinners; that on the contrary his deſign is to prove, the neceſſity of a good life, and to make men ſenſible of the efficacy of the Goſpel in reference to ſanctification. He had this in his view, in the vii chapter to the *Romans*, where he repreſents the difference between a corrupt and a regenerated man, and between the condition of man under the law, and his ſtate under the Goſpel. So that all he ſays of the carnal man ſold under ſin, &c. is to be underſtood of a corrupt man, living under the law.

I am

* Rom. vii. 14, 15, &c.

I am not ignorant that divines, otherwise able and pious men, have thought that St. *Paul* speaks of himself in this chapter, and that he represents there, what passes within a regenerate man; but I know likewise that a great many orthodox divines have rejected that exposition, as contrary to the scope of the apostle, to the constant doctrine of the New Testament, and to the spirit of the Christian religion. It is a sad thing that when a place is capable of two senses, men should pitch upon that, which comes nearer to the pretensions of sinners. I do not intend here to enter into a dispute, nor to offend those of a contrary opinion; I am persuaded that they have no design to countenance corruption; but as in all things we ought to seek the truth, and as the truth here is of great consequence for the promoting of piety, so I entreat those who might have scruples concerning those words, to make these following reflections.

1. Let them seriously and impartially consider, Whether it may be said, that St. *Paul* was a carnal man sold under sin, a man who did no good but evil, and a man involved in death; these are the strongest expressions which can be used, and which the Scripture uses to give as the character of wicked and impious men? To believe this of St. *Paul*, is so very hard, that a man must be able to digest any thing, who is not startled at it.

2. I desire them to attend to the drift of St. *Paul*; he had undertaken to shew, that the doctrine of justification by faith, did not introduce licentiousness; this he had proved in the whole vi chapter, as may appear by the reading it. Is it likely that in the vii chapter, he should overturn all that he had established in the preceding, and say, that the holiest men are captivated to the law of sin? If this be St. *Paul*'s doctrine, what becomes of the efficacy of faith to produce holiness, and how could he have answered that objection which he proposes to himself, chap. vi. 1. and 15. *Shall we continue in sin, shall we sin, we that are under grace?* St. *Paul* ought to have granted this objection, if it be true, that the most regenerate, are sold to sin. But it is plain, that in the vii chapter he goes on to prove what he had laid down already, to wit, that the Gospel sanctifies men, and not only this, but that the Gospel alone can sanctify men, and that the law could not. This is the scope of the whole chapter.

In the very first four verses, he shews that *Christians are no longer under the law*, nor consequently under sin, *and that they are dead to the law, that they may bring forth fruits unto God.* He expresses himself more clearly yet in the 5th verse, where he says, that there is a considerable difference between those who are under the law, and those who are in Jesus Christ. He plainly distinguishes these two states, and the time past from the present. *When we were in the flesh*, says he, *the motions of sin which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruits unto death, but now we are delivered from the law, that we should serve in newness of spirit.* These are the two states; the state past was a state of corruption, the present state is a state of holiness. But as it might have been inferred from thence, that the law was the cause of sin, the apostle refutes that imagination, from the 7th to the 14th verse.

After this, he describes the miserable condition of a man who is not regenerated by grace, and who still is under the law. He begins to do

this from the 14th verſe, by ſaying, *the law is ſpiritual, but I am carnal, ſold under ſin*, &c. And here no doubt it will be ſaid, that St. *Paul* ſpeaks of himſelf, and not of thoſe who are under the law; for ſays he, *I am carnal*, &c. But one may eaſily ſee that the Apoſtle uſes here a way of ſpeaking which is very ordinary in diſcourſe, and by which he that ſpeaks puts himſelf in the room of thoſe he ſpeaks of. And St. *Paul* had the more reaſon to expreſs himſelf after this manner, becauſe he had been himſelf under the law, before he was converted to Chriſtianity. There are many inſtances in Scripture of this way of ſpeaking, and we find one in this very chapter which is beyond exception. St. *Paul* ſays in the 9th verſe, *I was alive without the law once*, &c. If we do not admit here a figurative expreſſion, or if theſe words are ſtrictly taken; then we muſt ſay, that there was a time when this apoſtle was without law, which is both falſe and ridiculous. As therefore it is plain, that when he ſays, verſe 9 *I was without law*, he ſpeaks of the ſtate of thoſe men to whom the law was not given; ſo it is unqueſtionable, that when he ſays, *I am carnal*, &c. he deſcribes the ſtate of a corrupt man living under the law, and not his own. This is the key which lets us into the meaning of his diſcourſe, in which the law is mentioned, almoſt in every verſe.

3. Laſtly, That which makes it as clear as the ſun, that this is his true ſenſe, is, that when the apoſtle conſiders and ſpeaks of himſelf as a Chriſtian, he uſes quite another language. To be ſatisfy'd of this we need but run over this chapter, and compare it with other places in his epiſtles.

If he ſays here, verſe 7, 8. *That concupiſcence is felt and reigns within a man who is under the law*; he declares, Gal. v. 24. *That Chriſtians have crucified the fleſh with the luſts of it.* If he ſays, verſe 9, 10. *That ſin lives within him, and that he is dead*; he had ſaid, chap. vi. 2, 11. *That he was dead unto ſin, and living unto God through Jeſus Chriſt.* If he ſays, verſe 14. *That he is carnal and ſold under ſin*, it is apparent that he does not ſpeak of himſelf, ſince chap. viii. 1, and 8. he tells us, *That thoſe who are in Chriſt Jeſus are not in the fleſh, and that thoſe who are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God, and have not his Spirit.* If he ſays here, verſe 19. *I know that in me dwelleth no good thing*; he declares, Eph. iii. 17. *That Chriſt dwells in our hearts by faith.* If he ſays, verſe 19. *The good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I hate that I do*; he teſtifies in many places, *That the faithful do that which is good, and abſtain from evil.* If he complains, verſe 21, 22, 23. *of his being captivated to the law of ſin*; he teaches, chap. vi 17, 22. *That Chriſtians are no longer the ſervants of ſin, that they are freed from it, and become the ſervants of righteouſneſs.* If he crys out, ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* it is manifeſt, that theſe are not the expreſſions of a man regenerated by Jeſus Chriſt; for he adds immediately, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the ſpirit of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus, has made me free from the law of ſin and death*, chap. viii. 12.

Now let any body judge, whether what is ſaid in this chapter, can be applied to St. *Paul*, conſidered as a regenerated Chriſtian? Can it be ſaid, that concupiſcence reigns in him who has crucify'd it? That ſin lives in him who is dead to ſin? That he who is not in the fleſh, is a

carnal

carnal man? That he who is freed from ſin, is ſold to ſin? That no good thing dwells in thoſe in whom Chriſt dwells? That a man is at the ſame time miſerable and happy, a ſlave, and yet delivered by Jeſus Chriſt, dead and alive? To ſay this, is it not to call good evil, and evil good; to put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs? Is it not to admit downright contradictions in Scripture? But eſpecially, is it not to open a door to licentiouſneſs, and to give us a ſtrange notion of a regenerate man?

By all that has been ſaid, I do not mean that there are no remnants of corruption, in thoſe who are regenerated. Neither do I deny, but that in thoſe whoſe regeneration is but begun, there is ſome ſuch ſtruggle as that which is deſcribed in this chapter. This is *Muſculus*'s notion, in his Commentary upon the * *Romans*. But that this chapter ſhould be the picture of a regenerate man, and of a true member of Chriſt, is a thing ſo contrary to the Goſpel, and to all the ideas of religion, that one can hardly imagine, how there could ever be men, who believed it.

III. But that which corrupt Chriſtians endeavour to prove by thoſe paſſages I have mentioned, they think to put out of all queſtion, by the examples of thoſe ſaints whoſe ſins are recorded in holy Writ. To this purpoſe they alledge *Noah*, *Lot*, *Abraham*, *Sampſon*, *David*, *Solomon*, St. *Paul*, St. *Peter*, &c. and from theſe inſtances they conclude, that ſince thoſe great ſaints fell into ſuch heavy ſins; ſin is no obſtacle to ſalvation, and that it is not inconſiſtent with piety.

If we did make a right uſe of the word of God, we would draw a quite contrary inference from theſe inſtances; and conſider that it is abſurd to plead precedents againſt an expreſs law. If we muſt needs be governed by examples; we ought certainly to chuſe the good, and not the bad ones; to imitate what is praiſe-worthy in the ſaints, and not what deſerves blame; their faults being like ſo many beacons, ſet up to keep us from ſtriking upon the ſame rocks.

But to anſwer directly; I ſay firſt, that we are a little too apt to rank among ſaints, ſome illuſtrious perſons mentioned in the ſacred hiſtory; who perhaps were nothing leſs than holy men, and who it may be did periſh in their ſins, tho' God thought fit to make uſe of them, to carry on the deſigns of his Providence, and to deliver his people. It would be a raſh thing to pronounce upon any man's ſalvation, or to ſpeak irreverently of thoſe great men; but the inſtance of *Solomon*, whoſe ſalvation has been at all times queſtioned by divines, ſhould teach us, not to be ſo haſty, in placing thoſe among ſaints, of whom the Scripture ſpeaks with ſome honour, and in ſheltering our ſelves under their examples.

As to thoſe who by the teſtimony of the Scripture it ſelf, did truly fear God; I might obſerve that they fell but once into thoſe ſins related in the ſacred hiſtory; which would by no means favour impenitent and habitual ſinners. But this anſwer does not fully ſatisfie; for beſides that it ſuppoſes a thing which in reſpect of ſeveral perſons cannot certainly be known; there are ſome ſins which are ſo black, ſuch as adultery and apoſtacy, that a man can hardly commit them more than once, except he is altogether ſold to ſin, and further, any one of thoſe ſins is incompatible with a ſtate of regeneration.

We

* Page 118.

We muſt therefore frankly own, that when thoſe great men ſinned in that manner, they did not act like ſaints, that they put themſelves into a ſtate, which conſidered in it ſelf, was a ſtate of damnation, and that they had periſhed, if they had continued in it; for as *Ezekiel* ſays, chap. xxxiii. 18. *When the righteous turneth from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, he ſhall even die thereby.* We may judge of the heinouſneſs and danger of thoſe ſins, by the degree of repentance, which ſome of theſe men have expreſſed for them, and by the publick acknowledgments they made of them. What alarms was *David* in, when he compoſed the li *Pſalm*, which is the *Pſalm* of his repentance? What a deep ſenſe had St. *Peter* of his fault, in denying his maſter? What do then ſuch examples ſignify to thoſe who live in ſin and impenitency; who can be ſure that God will give him the grace, to recover himſelf as thoſe holy men did? Thoſe who preſume to ſin as they did, in hopes that they ſhall in like manner wipe off their ſins by repentance and amendment, reaſon juſt like a man, who ſhould ſwallow down poyſon, and conclude, it would not kill him, becauſe ſome who have been poyſoned, have eſcaped death.

But that which deſerves here our greateſt conſideration, is the time which thoſe ſaints lived in. There is great difference between us Chriſtians, and the good men under the Old Teſtament. Men before Chriſt, had not by a great deal that light which we have; and did not know as we do, the duties of holineſs. Our Saviour teaches us that diſtinction, when he ſays, **That John the Baptiſt was the greateſt among thoſe who were born of a woman, but that the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven was greater than John the Baptiſt*; that is to ſay, That Chriſtians have a much greater light than either *John* Baptiſt, or all the ancient prophets had. Now the meaſure of knowledge, ought to be the meaſure of piety; and therefore Chriſtians ought to excel the *Jews* in holineſs. What God did bear with at that time, would be in us altogether intolerable; and how can it be lawful for us to imitate the ancients in their vices, when we are bound to ſurpaſs their virtues?

This principle is of great moment, and without it we can hardly ſilence prophane perſons. A libertine inſiſting upon precedents, will ſay, that polygamy, the keeping of concubines, murder, divorce upon the ſlighteſt pretences, and ſuch like diſorders; are not ſo criminal as they are imagined to be; he will produce the inſtances of *Abraham* and *Jacob*, of the judges of *Iſrael*, of *David*, and the *Jews*. Far be it from us to detract from the honour and praiſe due to thoſe ancient worthies; they have done much for the time they lived in. But God forbid too, that we ſhould leſſen the glory and the advantages of the Chriſtian religion. If we ſpeak like Chriſtians, we will ſay, That God in his goodneſs did paſs over many things, by reaſon of the time, and of the natural temper of the *Jews*, who were a groſs and carnal people. Our Saviour's anſwer to the *Phariſees* concerning divorce, is very much to our purpoſe. † *Moſes ſuffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not ſo*; and then he adds, that whoſoever ſhould imitate the *Jews*, and do that which had been done and tolerated till then, ſhould be guilty of adultery.

We may eaſily apply this anſwer to the inſtance of St. *Peter*, ſince before our Saviour's aſcenſion, the apoſtles were weak as yet, and poſſeſſed with

* Matth. xi. 11. † Matth. xix. 8.

with various prejudices. But I think my ſelf bound to add a word or two concerning the example of St. *Paul*, becauſe it is commonly miſtaken. That apoſtle ſays, † *That he was a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, who was not worthy to be called an apoſtle, and that he was the chief of ſinners.* At the firſt hearing of theſe words many imagine, that St. *Paul* had been a profligate man, a ſwearer, and a godleſs wretch: and yet he means nothing elſe, but that he had once perſecuted the church. For otherwiſe, St. *Paul* before his converſion to Chriſtianity, was a good man, and his life was blameleſs and exemplary; for this he appeals to God, and the *Jews*, *Acts* xxiii. 1. and xxvi. 4. If he did perſecute the church then, it was through a blind zeal and ignorance; and for that reaſon, as he tells us himſelf, verſe 13, *He obtained mercy from God.* Is not this quite another caſe, than that of thoſe Chriſtians, who knowingly and wilfully allow themſelves in ſin?

It is another miſtake to make St. *Paul* ſay, as ſome do, *That he is the greateſt of ſinners*; he does not ſay that, he ſays only, *That he is the chief or the firſt of thoſe ſinners whom Jeſus Chriſt did ſave.* His meaning is, that he holds the firſt rank among converted ſinners, that he is a remarkable inſtance of the divine Mercy, and that Jeſus had begun by him, to ſhew his clemency and goodneſs. Thus he explains himſelf, verſe 16. *For this cauſe*, ſays he, *I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him.* This is exactly what he meant; for as to what ſome imagine, that St. *Paul* out of humility acknowledges himſelf the greateſt of all ſinners; I think that explication is wrong, and that it neither agrees with truth, nor piety, nor good ſenſe. A good man is not bound to think himſelf worſe than the greateſt ſinners; on the contrary, he ought to bleſs God, for that good which the divine Grace has wrought in him.

IV. But as the laſt refuge of ſinners is the mercy of God, ſo they commonly abuſe thoſe places, which ſet forth the greatneſs of that mercy. They found this principally upon theſe words, *Where ſin does abound, grace does much more abound.* Under the covert of this ſhort ſentence, the moſt flagitious ſinners think themſelves ſafe. But the bare reading St. *Paul*'s diſcourſe, will ſoon convince us, that this is to wreſt the Scripture into a falſe and pernicious ſenſe. The apoſtle's deſign is to ſhew, that all men being rendred ſinners in *Adam*, and by the law; the goodneſs of God was ſo great, that he was willing to ſave them through Jeſus Chriſt. In order to this, to eſtabliſh this truth, he had proved that before Chriſt, ſin and death reigned every where; not only among the Heathens, but alſo among the *Jews*; upon this he adds, *That where ſin did abound, grace did much more abound*; to ſignify God's having mercy on them, when they were involved in ſin and death. In a word, St. *Paul* ſets the happy condition to which men were advanced by Jeſus Chriſt, in oppoſition to that which they were in before. This is the ſenſe of that place, and the drift of the whole epiſtle. Can any one infer from thence, that now we may freely ſin, and that grace will exert it ſelf towards us, whatever ſins we may commit?

It is fit to obſerve beſides, that when St. *Paul* ſpeaks of grace, he does not only mean the pardoning, but likewiſe the ſanctifying grace; which deſtroys

† 1 Tim. i. 13, 15. 1 Cor. xv. 19.

destroys the pretension of the libertines. The apostle himself confutes it with a great deal of vehemence. He foresaw that some would argue like those we now contend with; and he makes this objection to himself: * *What then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* And this is his answer, *God forbid! how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? We who have been baptized into Christ's death, that we should walk in newness of life. Reckon ye also yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.* The apostle pursues these exhortations to the end of the chapter.

2. The promises and instances of God's mercy, are frequently also taken in a sense which favours corruption and security. All that the Gospel says upon this head, is interpreted by vicious men, as if the Son of God was come into the world, to give men a license to sin. To this purpose the instances of that woman who was a sinner, of *Zacheus* and the converted thief, are often alledged; as likewise the parable of the prodigal son, of the publican, and of the labourers. And from these instances, as well as from our Saviour's declarations, † *That he is not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, it is concluded, that the greatest sinners may obtain salvation, as well as the just. But if those who quote these instances, did narrowly examine them, they would read in them, their own condemnation. For first, all these sinners mentioned in the Gospel, did repent and were converted. That woman who had been a notorious sinner expresses the most lively sorrow; the publican smites his breast, the prodigal comes to himself again, and detests his former excesses; *Zacheus*, if he was an unjust man, restores fourfold. From these instances we may very well infer, that God never rejects returning sinners. But even this, is an invincible argument, that there is no mercy for those, who persist in their sins, and that too in hopes of pardon.

Besides, we must know that our Saviour's design in all these parables and instances, was to inform men that he was come to invite the greatest sinners to repentance; and especially to let the *Jews* understand, that for all the high opinion they had of their own dignity and merit, the Heathens, who lived in the greatest corruption, were to be admitted into God's covenant, and to have a share in his favour. Which actually happened to all those Heathens, who did believe in Jesus Christ. These instances and parables then represent the state men were in at that time, and not the state of those, who are entred already into the Christian church. It can never be said too much, nor remembred too often in the reading of the Gospel; that there is a vast difference, between those Heathens, who never heard a word of God or Jesus Christ; and Christians who were born in the church and live in the covenant with God.

Thus I think I have examined those places of Scripture, which are most commonly abused by the libertines. If I have omitted any, I hope what has been said in this chapter, may serve to suggest pertinent and satisfactory answers to them.

* Rom. vi. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12. † Mark ii. 17.

CAUSE V.

A false Modesty.

CORRUPTION is not wholly to be imputed to that ignorance, or to those prejudices and loose opinions which prevail among Christians. For men do not always sin through want of knowledge, or out of meer wantonness and libertinism. There are many who acknowledge the viciousness of the age, and the necessity of a good life; and yet they neglect their duties intirely, or at least they are very remiss in the doing of it; acting, for the most part, against their own persuasions.

There must have been then other causes of corruption in men, besides those which we have hitherto discovered. It is necessary to search into these, and to find out, if possible, why many persons, who want no instruction, and are solicited by the motions of their own consciences, to embrace the side of virtue and piety, do notwithstanding, continue in vice and corruption.

This seems to proceed chiefly from two dispositions, which men are commonly in.

On the one hand, they are restrained by an ill shame, from acting suitably to the sentiments of their own consciences; and on the other hand, they put off their conversion, hoping they shall one day make up all the irregularities of their conduct, by repentance. I look upon these two dispositions, as two of the principal causes of corruption, and therefore I thought it might be proper, to consider them both distinctly. I design to treat of *false Modesty* in this chapter, and to shew, 1. The nature, and 2. The effects of it.

1. By *false Modesty*, I mean that shame, which hinders men *to do* that which they know to be their duty. I call this shame vicious or ill, to distinguish it from another kind of shame, which is good and commendable, which consists, in being ashamed to do ill things. If *false shame* is a source of corruption; that other shame which restrains from evil, is a principle of virtue, and a preservative against sin; and therefore it ought to be as carefully cherished and maintained, as vicious shame should be avoided or shaken off. For as soon as the sense of this commendable shame is gone, innocency is irrecoverably lost. It is a part of the character of sinners in Scripture, that their wickedness raises no blushing, or confusion in them.

I say then, that this false shame, keeps men from doing at the same time what they know and approve to be their duty; and it is under that notion particularly, that I am to consider it here. It is not my design to speak of that shame, which arises from ignorance, or contempt, and which is to be met with in those profane and worldly men, who because they do not know religion, or judge it unworthy of their application, think it a disgrace to follow its maxims. I refer such men to the first chapter of this book, and to some further considerations, which I am to insist upon elsewhere. The shame I speak of at present, supposes some knowledge in the mind, and some value for, and inclination to piety. From whence it appears, how dangerous the effects of that shame are,

and how important it is to know and observe them; since it seduces and corrupts even those who are none of the worst men, and of whom otherwise, we might reasonably hope well.

Now to apprehend the nature of this vicious shame; it must be observed, that shame commonly springs from two causes; sometimes it proceeds from the nature of the thing we are ashamed of, or from the opinion we have of it: thus men are ashamed of things, which either are, or appear dishonest in their nature. But sometimes also shame is an effect of the regard we bear to other men's judgment, and then we are ashamed to do things which may bring contempt upon us, and disgrace us in the world. One may soon perceive that the shame that is vicious does not arise from the first of these causes. Religion has nothing in it, that is shameful and dishonest; for far from that, it is of all things the most comely and honourable, and the most worthy of a man; and it appears such, even to those, who by reason of a groundless shame, dare not practise the rules of it. The true cause then of this false modesty, is a feeble regard to men's judgment, and a fear of falling under their contempt or hatred. Piety is little practised in the world, it is despised, and it is hated; and these are the three principal causes of vicious shame.

1. Piety is little practised in the world; few people love or practise it. Now a man is very inclinable to do that which is commonly done; he thinks it is safest and most honourable, to side with the multitude: he is afraid of making himself ridiculous, by being singular. It is a maxim generally received, That we ought to comply with custom, and to do as others do. The reason then why many have not the courage to be on the side of religion, is because that side is deserted and abandoned.

2. Piety is often despised in the world. It is looked upon as a mean and disgraceful thing. The strictness of a man, who acts upon principles of religion and conscience, is imputed to weakness of mind, singularity of humour, or caprice, and sometimes to hypocrisy and pride. Those who profess devotion and piety, are turned into ridicule: and on the contrary, it is thought honourable to comply in every thing with the ways and fashions of the age. Tho' these sentiments are very unjust, yet they make a great impression, because few people have firmness enough to slight the judgment and contempt of men. We have naturally a quick sense of honour, and nothing is so unsupportable to self-love, as contempt; so that this temptation is dangerous, and it easily produces in a man a false shame, which diverts him from religion.

3. Piety does likewise procure the hatred of the world; because a good life accuses, condemns, and reproaches those who live ill. Besides, religion obliges us sometimes to do things which displease and offend men. How cautious soever it may be, it is much, if upon many occasions, it does not stir up their jealousy, their hatred, or their spleen. A good man is often bound to refuse what is desired of him. He is unacquainted with the maxims of that mean and fawning complaisance, which is necessary to get every body's love. Many for this reason neglect piety. They dare not let shine a light, which discovers the weaknesses and errors of others; and fear and shame together make them think, that it would be ill-breeding, as well as a piece of imprudence, to follow a course of life which might render them odious.

From theſe conſiderations it appears already, that this ſhame is one of the general fountains of corruption, and that it can produce none but very ill effects; firſt upon thoſe in whom it is, and next upon other men.

1. The natural effect of vicious ſhame, is to diſſuade a man from his duty, and to draw him into ſin. It makes his knowledge uſeleſs, it fruſtrates the warnings which his conſcience gives him; and ſo it extinguiſhes in him the principles of virtue. Thoſe who are poſſeſſed with this ſhame, dare neither ſpeak nor act as they ought, they diſſemble their true ſentiments, they offer violence to their conſciences, they have not the courage to ſpeak the truth, or to reprove their neighbours, when occaſion requires; they are loath to confeſs or to amend their faults; in a word, they frequently neglect the moſt indiſpenſable duties of piety and charity: and all this, becauſe they are checkt by a falſe ſhame.

But if this ſhame hinders us to do good, it does as forcibly prompt us to evil: as ſoon as man thinks it a diſgrace to do good, and to diſtinguiſh himſelf by a Chriſtian deportment; he preſently conceives likewiſe, that it would be a ſhame to him, not to imitate the irregularities of others. Hence it is that we applaud ſin, that we are carried away by the ſolicitations, or examples of perſons of authority; that we cannot withſtand the entreaties of friends; that we ingage in unjuſt enterprizes, or criminal diverſions; and that we fall into many other wicked practices. A very little reflection upon our ſelves, will eaſily convince us, that ſhame produces all theſe ill effects. A heathen author * has proved long ago, in an excellent tract, That falſe modeſty is one of the greateſt obſtacles to virtue; and that men commit many faults, and bring a great deal of miſchief upon themſelves, only becauſe they dare not refuſe to comply with others.

2. The effects of this ſhame are not leſs fatal in reſpect of other men. As it proceeds from the regard we bear to their judgments, ſo it uſually ſhews it ſelf in their company; ſo that we cannot but ſcandalize and corrupt them, when we govern our ſelves by the ſuggeſtions of this falſe ſhame. For not to mention here the ſcandal which this gives to good men; thoſe very perſons for whoſe ſake we uſe ſuch ſinful compliances, and who deſpiſe religion, conceive yet a greater contempt of it, when they ſee, that thoſe who ought to ſupport it's intereſt, are aſhamed of it, and dare not openly profeſs it. They judge that piety muſt be indeed a very mean and contemptible thing; and when they obſerve that men are afraid to diſpleaſe them, they take ſuch an aſcendant over them, that virtue dares no more appear in their preſence. Beſides, that ſuch an indulgence towards vice, gives a new force to it. If vicious men are not reproved, it confirms them in their ill habits; if they are imitated, they are authorized; if we are aſhamed to confeſs our faults before them, we do not heal the ſcandal which we have given them, and that is the greater for having been occaſioned by men who are thought pious, and not by libertines. But that we may be the more ſenſible of the pernicious effects of this kind of ſhame, we ought to take notice of three things, which are very remarkable in this matter.

1. Shame is a thing which has an abſolute power over a man. Other paſſions may more eaſily be reſiſted; but when ſhame has gained an aſcendant

* *Plutarch.*

aſcendant over the mind, it is extream hard to be conquered, eſpecially if it proceeds from the regard we have for men; for when it ariſes from a natural diſpoſition, it may ſooner be overcome. The greateſt threats and promiſes will not ſometimes ſhake a man, who will preſently yield if ſhame can be excited within him. How often do we find the moſt vigorous efforts we can make upon our ſelves, and our beſt reſolutions quite daſhed, by a ſilly baſhfulneſs? A jeſt, a bare look, or a ſlight apprehenſion of being thought ridiculous, or a bigot, is ſometimes enough to confound us, and to make all our good purpoſes vaniſh.

2. It ought to be conſidered, that the ſhame we ſpeak of here, reſtrains thoſe perſons, who in their hearts are inclined to virtue; thoſe who live in a profound ignorance, or in a total obduration, being not ſuſceptible of this ſhame. It ſuppoſes, as has been ſaid, ſome remainder of conſcience and knowledge ſoliciting man to his duty; but it overcomes that knowledge and thoſe good ſentiments. We are to impute to this vicious ſhame, a great part of the ſins of good men; and this is one of the articles upon which they have moſt reaſon to reproach themſelves; as is well known to thoſe who make any reflection upon their conduct. And if this ſhame is able to ſpoil thoſe who otherwiſe are virtuous, and to extinguiſh their zeal and piety; we ought to reckon it among the principal cauſes of corruption.

3. Shame may lead men to the higheſt degrees of wickedneſs. For beſides that a man ſins againſt his conſcience, when for fear of men he dares not do his duty; beſides that he offends God in a very provoking manner, when he is aſhamed to obey him, and fears men more than him; I ſay, that this ſhame is apt to betray him into the greateſt enormities. A man is capable of every thing when he becomes a ſlave to other men's judgment, and when complaiſance or humane conſideration, have a greater force upon him than the laws of religion, and his duty. Whenever a man dares not appear good, he dares appear in ſome meaſure wicked. And when he tyes to virtue an idea of ſhame, he is not far from affixing an idea of honour to vice, and from complying in every thing with the opinions of looſe and prophane perſons.

1. Men do not arrive of a ſudden at this degree of corruption; falſe ſhame carries them to it by little and little. It makes one ſin at firſt through complaiſance, tho' with ſome reluctancy. By this, conſcience grows weaker; a man contracts the habit of ſlighting its ſuggeſtions, and vice becomes more familiar to him. Then he begins to ſin more boldly; the ſhame of doing good increaſes, and the ſhame of ſinning grows leſs. In a little time he comes to do out of cuſtom and inclination, what he did before but ſeldom, and with ſome inward conflict. From thence he proceeds to an open contempt of piety, and ſo he forſakes an intereſt to which he was well affected at firſt, but which this ſhame has made him diſlike. Thus many perſons, who had good diſpoſitions in their youth, being let looſe into the world, have loſt their innocence, and are turn'd libertines and atheiſts.

Now this falſe modeſty being ſo pernicious we can never labour too much to prevent its ill effects. And this we ſhall ſucceed in, if we ſeriouſly conſider, that there is a great deal both of error and cowardice

in the ſentiments and conduct of thoſe, who are hinder'd by ſhame, from diſcharging the duties of religion and conſcience: firſt, there is a great deal of error in their proceeding. This ſhame is founded upon nothing elſe, but the judgment which the world makes of piety. But if thoſe who deſpiſe religion are in the wrong, as they moſt certainly are; if it is extravagance and folly in them, to paſs a falſe judgment upon piety; it is a much greater madneſs in thoſe who underſtand better things, to ſubſcribe to a judgment which they know to be falſe and erroneous, and to make that the principle of their actions. If virtue is a thing that is good, juſt, neceſſary, acceptable to God, and uſeful to thoſe who practiſe it; if with it we cannot fail of happineſs, and if without it there is nothing but dread and terror; why ſhould we be aſhamed to give up our ſelves to it? A wiſe man ought to eſteem that which deſerves eſteem, and if ignorant and corrupt people are of another mind, he ought to ſet himſelf above their judgment, and to deſpiſe the contempt of the ſenſeleſs multitude. The judgment of men cannot make that juſt which is unjuſt, nor ſuperſede the neceſſity of what is neceſſary; ſo that it ſhould be of no weight in ſo important a concernment, as that of our ſalvation. Our happineſs is not to be decided by man's eſteem, or contempt; and the approbation of God and our conſcience, is infinitely to be preferred before their groundleſs opinions.

But if there is ſo much of error in vicious ſhame, there is likewiſe a great deal of cowardice in it. Nothing is more baſe and unworthy, than for a man to deſert the intereſt of virtue, when he is ſolicited by his own conſcience to adhere to it. Not to have reſolution enough to do his duty in ſuch a caſe, is on the one hand to ſubmit his reaſon and conſcience to the caprice of others, and to depreſs himſelf below the vileſt things in the world; and on the other it is to have greater regard for men than for God. And is there any thing more abject than this proceeding? Is not this a ſhameful cowardice in a Chriſtian, who is called to profeſs openly his religion and faith, and ought to think it his glory, to maintain the cauſe of virtue and juſtice, in ſpight of all the contradiction and contempt of the age? That threatning which our Saviour has denounced againſt thoſe, who ſhould not have the courage to embrace the Chriſtian profeſſion, or ſhould abandon it, belongs alſo to thoſe mean-ſpirited Chriſtians we are now ſpeaking of. * *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

The firſt and chief remedy, againſt this falſe ſhame, is then to be poſſeſſed with the following reflections. Before all things to have a right apprehenſion of the certainty and importance of religion; to conſider that it propoſes to us infinite rewards, but that thoſe rewards are reſerved only for thoſe, who have the courage to obſerve its precepts; to think what pleaſure and glory it is, to be approved of God and of one's own conſcience; to fix deeply this great truth in our minds; that men's judgment is very inconſiderable; that our felicity depends neither upon their eſteem nor contempt; and to remember that the Scripture calls the men of

* Mark viii. 38.

of the world fools, and that a time will come, when *ſhame, confuſion and miſery*, ſhall fall to the lot of thoſe deſpiſers of religion, while † *glory, honour and peace ſhall be to every one that does good.*

2. We ſhall eaſily conquer this ſhame if we conſider, that the danger of incurring men's contempt or hatred by doing our duty, is not always ſo great as we may imagine. I confeſs piety is often deſpiſed; but yet it frequently commands reſpect. Even thoſe who think it ſtrange that their example ſhould not be followed, cannot help having a ſecret eſteem and veneration for good men. When zeal is accompanied with meekneſs and diſcretion, there is no fear that a man ſhould make himſelf odious or ridiculous by practiſing virtue. A Chriſtian deportment, is ſo far from expoſing men always to the contempt of the world; that on the contrary it frequently happens, that thoſe who would avoid this contempt, by neglecting their duty, do thereby bring it upon themſelves.

3. There might be yet another remedy againſt this vicious ſhame; and that is the example of men of authority. Whatever they approve or do, is reputed honourable in the world; and on the other ſide, what they deſpiſe or neglect, is thought mean and diſgraceful. It would therefore be an eaſy thing to them, to correct the notions which men commonly have of religion. As ſoon as they ſhall love and honour it; other men will no longer be aſhamed of it, but will place their glory in practiſing it. This I am to inlarge upon in the ſecond part of this treatiſe.

CAUSE VI.

The Delaying of Repentance.

I DO not know whether any illuſion is more ordinary, or contributes more to the ſupport of vice in the world, than that which I deſign to attack in this chapter, and that is the delaying repentance. We muſt not believe that men are ſo blind and ſo hardened, as never to think of their ſalvation. There are few who have not a general intention to obtain it. Even among thoſe who live ill, many are convinced, that converſion is neceſſary, and that they are not yet in a ſtate of grace. If it be aſked, why then they do not repent? I anſwer, that ſo unreaſonable a proceeding, which ſeems ſo contradictory to it ſelf, ought to be imputed to the hope they entertain, of clearing all ſcores one day by repentance; and of obtaining the pardon of all their ſins, through the divine Mercy. This is the true cauſe of the greateſt part of thoſe ſins, which are committed in the world. It is that deceitful hope which fruſtrates all the endeavours that are uſed, to make men forſake their vicious habits. The delay of converſion, ought therefore to be placed among the cauſes of the bad lives of Chriſtians; and the importance of this ſubject, has made me reſolve to beſtow a particular chapter upon it.

† Rom. ii. 10.

Now to handle this matter right, we are to obſerve two different ways of putting off converſion; for all men do not delay it in the ſame manner, and the ſame ſentiments and diſpoſitions ought not to be ſuppoſed in them all. Some put it off to a remote time, and to the very end of their lives. Others do not adjourn it ſo long; they deſign to go about it a good while before death; at leaſt they hope ſo; and they put it off to an undetermined time. The firſt ſin properly in hopes of pardon, but the others ſin in hopes of repentance. The former deceive themſelves more groſly, they think that in order to be ſaved, it is enough to beg for mercy, and to repent tho' never ſo late; the illuſion of the others is more ſubtil, they conceive it is neceſſary to reform and to forſake ſin; but for all that they do not convert themſelves. Tho' theſe two ways of delaying have an affinity with one another, and might in a great meaſure be encountered with the ſame arguments, yet I ſhall conſider them here ſeparately.

I. Men commonly entertain this opinion, that if they do but repent at the end of their lives, their ſins will be no hindrance to their ſalvation. They allot for this repentance, the approaches of death, old-age, or the time of ſickneſs; and they ſuppoſe that then, they ſhall fit themſelves for a Chriſtian death, by confeſſing their ſins, and having recourſe to the divine Mercy. It is not, I think, needful to prove, that this opinion is very common, for who can deny it? Neither will I go about to ſhew that it feeds corruption and encourages ſecurity, by propoſing to men ſuch a method of ſalvation, as leaves them at liberty to live ſtill in ſin; for that is ſelf evident. It is more important to let men ſee how falſe and dangerous an imagination that is, which makes them believe, that ſo they repent before death, they ſhall avoid damnation and be ſaved. In order to this, we muſt endeavour to diſcover the principle they act upon, and to unfold the true ſentiments of their hearts.

The delay of repentance includes two different motions; the one carries a man towards ſalvation, and the other towards ſin. On the one hand, man is neither ſuch an enemy to himſelf, as to be altogether unconcerned about his ſalvation, nor ſo blind as not to perceive that repentance is neceſſary. On the other hand, he is ſo addicted to his luſts, that he cannot reſolve to renounce them. In this perplexity, ſelf-love finds him out an expedient by which he thinks to reconcile with his appetites, the care of his ſalvation. And that is, that if he ſins, yet he intends to repent.

But here it is manifeſt, that this man puts a cheat upon himſelf, and that ſuch ſentiments proceed only from ſelf-love, and from a ſtrong affection to ſin. Nothing elſe but the abſolute neceſſity of dying, and of giving an account to God obliges him to deſtin the end of his life to acts of repentance. For it cannot be ſaid, that the love of God and of virtue has any ſhare in this conduct. Is it any love or regard to God, that makes a man deſire him in his laſt extremity, and when he can enjoy the world no longer? This ſhews that a man thinks of God only becauſe he expects ſalvation at his hands; which is to deal with him as with an enemy, to whom we ſurrender our ſelves as late, and upon as good terms as we can, and only that we may not periſh. Such a delay includes a poſitive reſolution to offend God, and to gratify one's paſſions, at leaſt for the preſent. He that thinks to repent hereafter, is not wil-

ling to repent now. He allots the preſent time for the ſatisfying of his luſts, and for the committing of thoſe ſins, which are to be the matter of his future repentance. This is all that is fixed and certain in his reſolution; for as to what he promiſes for the future it is moſt uncertain; and if we conſider the thing right, he promiſes nothing at all, for he does not know, whether he ſhall not die very ſoon, nor what he ſhall do, in caſe he lives ſometime longer.

The hazard to which a man expoſes himſelf by this delay, is evident. In order to a complete repentance, two things are requiſite. The firſt is to have time and opportunity to repent; the ſecond is, to make uſe of that time and opportunity. Thoſe who put off their converſion to the laſt, muſt ſuppoſe that they ſhall have theſe two advantages. But theſe things are extreamly uncertain, and no man in the world can be ſure of them.

1. No man can promiſe himſelf, that he ſhall have time and opportunity to repent at the end of his life. It is true in fact, that more than one half of mankind, die without having time to prepare for death. If we reckon up all thoſe who are ſnatched away in an inſtant by unforeſeen accidents, or a ſudden death, all thoſe who periſh in war, all thoſe who are ſeized with diſtempers which take away their ſenſes, all thoſe whom the approaches of death do not move to repentance, becauſe they do not apprehend themſelves in any danger of dying: and if we add to theſe, thoſe whoſe only preparation is to have a miniſter to pray by their bed-ſide, when they can hardly hear a few words of what he ſays: it is certain, that all theſe together, make up above the half of mankind. Upon this I aſk, even ſuppoſing that it were time enough for a man to repent when he ſees death coming, whether it would not be folly and madneſs, for him to venture his ſalvation upon the hope of repenting then?

It ſeems to many, that it is the way to drive ſinners into deſpair, to tell them they ought not to build the hope of ſalvation, upon what they ſhall do in the extremity of life. But what I have ſaid juſt now proves evidently, that if ſalvation did depend upon the manner of dying, men muſt live in continual fears, and in a kind of deſperation; ſince their ſalvation would depend upon a thing, which the half of mankind cannot reckon upon. On the contrary nothing is more comfortable to men, than to know that God grants them their whole lives to work out their ſalvation in; and that if they improve to that purpoſe the leiſure and conveniences they have, their death will be happy, which way ſoever it may happen. But tho' what I have ſaid were not true, and tho' all might aſſure themſelves that they ſhall perceive the approaches of death, and have time to prepare for that laſt paſſage; yet what certainty have they, that they ſhall make uſe of that opportunity, and that their converſion will not be moſt difficult, if not impoſſible? Converſion is not wrought, without God interpoſing, by thoſe means which grace uſes for that end. And can any man flatter himſelf with the hope, that theſe means ſhall be offered him to the laſt, and that God in his juſt anger will not withdraw them from him? There is neither particular revelation, nor general promiſe, to give ſuch aſſurances to any man living. So far from it, that God tells us many things in Scripture, which leave no ground for hope, to thoſe who abuſe his mercy.

But

But further, What can we imagine that God will do in favour of a hardned ſinner, at the time of death? When God has made uſe of the preaching of his word; of exhortations, promiſes, threatnings, inward ſuggeſtions and motions of his grace; when God, I ſay, has uſed all theſe means, for twenty, thirty, or forty years without any ſucceſs: I cannot apprehend, what men expect that he ſhould do more, at the hour of death. If it be ſaid, that he can by a particular diſpenſation, by ſudden inſpirations, by a kind of miracle, convert a ſinner in his laſt minutes; I will not diſpute what God can do; but I will not ſcruple to ſay, that in the ordinary courſe of grace, converſion is not wrought by ſudden and miraculous inſpirations: the Goſpel ſpeaks of nothing like that, and thoſe who look for ſuch miracles, had beſt ſee, what they found their hope upon.

It is certain beſides, that repentance is moſt difficult on man's part, when he is at the point of death. If a man has lived in ignorance and vice, is he not in great danger of dying ignorant and hardned? How will he perform duties then, of which he has not ſo much as a notion? Can a man at that time change his ill inclinations and ſhake off his vicious habits of a ſudden? All thoſe who have applied themſelves to the work of converſion, know by experience, that the conqueſt, I will not ſay of many, but of one ſingle vice, has required both time, and aſſiduous and conſtant care. Vicious habits are not to be deſtroyed but by degrees, and good ones are acquired only by reiterated acts. It is repugnant to man's nature, that this ſhould be done in an inſtant. How can any one then reckon, that ſo conſiderable a change, as that which true converſion requires, will be effected in the ſhort time of a ſickneſs? And if this was poſſible, and through great endeavours might be done, yet can any man aſſure himſelf, that he ſhall have then all that freedom and all that ſtrength of mind and body, which are neceſſary to ſet about this general reformation? Is the time of ſickneſs wherein a man is ſo much ſunk, and has the leaſt either of leiſure or ſtrength, ſo very fit for a buſineſs of this importance? All that a man can do then, is to betake himſelf to ſome confuſed and abrupt devotions, the ordinary refuge of thoſe ſinners, who have lived in a ſtate of obduration. But will that ſerve the turn? Are ſome haſty reflections upon a man's paſt life, ſome acts of contrition, ſome prayers proceeding from trouble and agony, and extorted only by the fear of death, ſome ſobs and groans indiſtinctly breathed up to heaven; are theſe, I ſay, ſufficient to make amends for all that is paſt, to extirpate many inveterate habits, and to ſecure to a ſinner an eternity of bliſs?

I ſhall add two conſiderations which are convincing, and cannot be conteſted.

1. By growing in years, men loſe the ſenſe and remembrance of their ſins. Age and cuſtom produce this effect. Excepting ſome extraordinary ſins which cannot be forgot, moſt men do not remember their faults. And how ſhould they remember them, ſince for the moſt part they do not perceive when they commit them? We daily ſee men who will lye and ſwear, and fly out into paſſion almoſt every minute; and yet do not reflect upon it; nay, they think themſelves free from thoſe faults. This error proceeds ſo far, that ſome very great ſinners, who are living in

in criminal practices, fancy themſelves pious, and make no doubt, but that they are in the favour of God. Now ſince the cuſtom of ſinning, does blind men to ſuch a degree; is it likely that after they have ſpent their lives in this ſecurity, they will effectually repent at their death? Can a man repent who does not know the reaſons why he ſhould, who does not feel, or has forgot his ſins, and who thinks beſides, that he is in a good ſtate, and that he needs no repentance?

2. If repentance ſuppoſes the knowledge of ſin, it ſuppoſes beſides a hatred of it. But he who has loved ſin to the laſt, is leſs able then to hate, than he is to know his ſins. I cannot comprehend, how a man who has loved the world all his life, who has made it his only delight and ſtudy to gratify his luſts, and who has always been cold and indifferent towards religion; ſhould, when death appears, ſuddenly change his inclinations, hate what he loved, and love what till then he looked upon with indifference. So quick a paſſage from the love, to the hatred of ſin, is very rare. The ſorrow for ſin, and the hatred of it, are always faint and weak in the beginnings of repentance, even in thoſe who repent ſincerely. Converſion proceeds by degrees; a man muſt have diſcontinued ſinning, and be already ſettled in the habits of virtue; before he can have a ſtrong averſion to ſin. And what kind of repentance then can that be, which begins in the extremity of life?

1. But here it is objected firſt, that God is always ready to reſtore the greateſt ſinners to his favour, when they have recourſe to his mercy, and that there are expreſs promiſes in the Goſpel, which aſſure us of this. I grant it: God never rejects a repenting ſinner. But before a man can build upon this, the hope of being received into God's favour at the hour of death, he muſt be ſure that he ſhall then ſincerely repent. Now I think I have demonſtrated, that this is what no man can depend upon. As to the promiſes which are made to repentance in the Goſpel; I do not deny but that they may be applied in a good ſenſe to all ſinners; but yet it is certain, that they are made in favour of thoſe, whom God was to call to the Chriſtian religion, and chiefly in favour of the Heathens. Chriſt and his apoſtles were to aſſure all men, that the ſins they had committed, ſhould not exclude them from the covenant of grace, provided they did ſincerely mourn for them, and part with them. When the Heathens came to baptiſm, nothing elſe was required of them, but that they ſhould repent, and make a ſolemn vow of being holy for the time to come. But as to Chriſtians it cannot be ſaid, that God demands nothing of them but repentance and ſorrow for ſins; for he calls them to holineſs upon pain of damnation.

In this ſenſe it was, that the apoſtles preached repentance, and by this we may know, how much Chriſtianity is decayed. That repentance, which conſiſts in the confeſſion of ſins, and in a reſolution to forſake them, is the duty at which the Heathens began. This was the firſt thing which the apoſtles required of them; it was preparatory to the Chriſtian religion. St. *Paul* * places the doctrine of repentance, among the fundamental points, and the firſt duties in which the *Catechumens* were inſtructed before baptiſm. But now Chriſtians look upon repentance, as the duty with which they are to end their lives; that is to ſay, they deſign

* Heb. vi. 1.

ſign to end, where the Heathens begun, and to enter heaven at the ſame gate, which admitted *Pagans* into the church.

2. It will be ſaid further, That ſometimes men, who have lived in ſin, die to all appearance, in very good diſpoſitions. To this I reply; That we ſee a great many more of thoſe perſons who die in a ſtate of inſenſibility; and that by conſequence, a ſinner who puts off his repentance, has more reaſon to fear, than to hope. For who has told him, that the fate of theſe laſt, will not be his? and what ſurer preſage can there be of ſo tragical a death, than the preſent hardneſs of his heart? Beſides I do not know, whether it happens frequently, as the objection ſeems to ſuppoſe, that perſons who have lived ill, are well diſpoſed when they die. If repentance can be ſaving and effectual when it begins only upon a death-bed, every body muſt own, that it ought to be very lively and deep, attended with demonſtrations of the moſt bitter ſorrow, and with all the proofs that a dying man can give of the ſincerity of his converſion. But we do not ſee many inſtances of this nature. There are but few great ſinners, who expreſs a lively compunction at their death, or a ſincere deteſtation of their ſins, who have a due ſenſe of their wickedneſs, and endeavour as much as they can to make reparation for it, who practiſe reſtitution, and edify all about them, by diſcharging the other obligations of conſcience. It is but ſeldom that we ſee ſuch penitents.

Beſides, the expreſſions of devotion and repentance, which are uſed by dying men, are not always ſincere. It is much to be feared that their repentance is nothing elſe but a certain emotion, which the neceſſity of dying, and the approaches of God's judgment, muſt needs raiſe in the mind of every man, who has his wits about him, and has ſome ideas of religion. Nothing is more deceitful, than the judging of a man by what he either ſays, or does, when he is under the effects of fear or trouble. It is commonly ſaid of thoſe, who have given ſome ſigns of piety upon their death-beds, that they have made a very Chriſtian end: but there is often a great miſtake in that judgment. And to be ſatisfied of it, we need but obſerve what happens to ſome who have eſcaped death, or ſome imminent danger. While the peril laſted, who could be more humble and holy than they? They ſhewed ſo much devotion, and uttered ſuch diſcourſes, that all the ſtanders by were edified by them; their tears, their prayers, their proteſtations of amendment, in a word, their whole deportment had, in all appearance, ſo much of Chriſtian zeal in it, that the beholders were ſtruck with admiration. But there are not many of theſe, who when the danger is over, continue in the ſame diſpoſitions, remember their promiſes, or alter any thing in their former courſe of life; almoſt all of them return to their old habits as ſoon as the calamity is paſt. Theſe are generally the fruits of that repentance which is excited by the fear of death, in thoſe who recover: and what effects then can it have in reſpect of thoſe that die?

I confeſs, we ought not to condemn any body; but I think we ſhould not pronounce a definitive ſentence, in favour of thoſe who have led an ill life. For tho' men's judgment makes no alteration in the ſtate of the dead; yet it may have a very pernicious effect upon the living, who conclude from it, that a man may die well, tho' he has lived ill. And while I am upon this ſubject, I muſt ſay, that nothing contributes more to the keeping

keeping up of theſe dangerous opinions, than when the miniſters of religion commend, without diſcretion, the piety of the dead. And yet this is frequently done, eſpecially in great towns, and in the courts of princes. There are to be found in thoſe places, mean-ſpirited and unworthy preachers, who proſtitute their tongues and their pens to the praiſe of ſome perſons, who had nothing of Chriſtianity in their lives, and whoſe condition ſhould rather make a man tremble. But if ſome remnant of ſhame reſtrains them from carrying their flattery ſo far, as to commend the lives of thoſe, whoſe panegyrick they have undertaken; then they ſeek the matter of their praiſes, in ſome ſigns of piety, which thoſe perſons gave, before they left the world. Now I dare ſay, that the moſt atheiſtical diſcourſes, and the corrupteſt maxims of libertines, are not by much ſo ſubtil a poyſon, as ſuch kind of elogies, delivered before men who are ingaged in all the diſorders of the age, and then diſperſed through the world.

3. The inſtance of the converted thief, who prayed to our Saviour upon the croſs, and was received into paradiſe, is ſeldom forgotten. But this inſtance is generally very ill underſtood. Firſt, it is ſuppoſed, without any ground for it, that this thief repented only upon the croſs, and that his converſion was the effect of a ſudden inſpiration. But who can tell whether his converſion was not begun, either before he was taken, or in the priſon, where it is probable that he was kept for ſome time, before the feaſt of paſſover? But if his converſion muſt needs be ſudden, and wrought only a few minutes before his death; if we muſt of neceſſity aſcribe it to a miraculous inſpiration and to thoſe ſingular circumſtances which he then happened to be in; yet I do not ſee what can be inferred from this inſtance; ſince no man living can aſſure himſelf that any ſuch thing will befall him.

But be that as it will, we ſhould, I think, obſerve a vaſt difference between the ſtate of this thief, and that of a Chriſtian. This poor wretch had not been called before, as Chriſtians are; he had never known our Saviour; or at leaſt he had not profeſſed his religion; he had not had that illumination and thoſe opportunities which grace offers every day, to thoſe to whom the Goſpel is preached. And ſo his repentance tho' it came late, yet it might be as effectual to ſalvation, as that of the Heathens, who embraced Chriſtianity in their riper years, and who happened to die immediately after baptiſm.

I ſhall ſay a word or two upon the parable of the labourers, where we read, * that thoſe who went to work in the vineyard only an hour before ſun-ſet, received the ſame wages, with thoſe who had been at work ever ſince the morning. From this ſinners imagine it may be proved by an invincible argument, that thoſe who repent a little before death, will obtain the ſame reward with thoſe whoſe life has been regular. But this was not our Saviour's meaning in that parable. It ſignifies only, that thoſe whom God ſhould call laſt, and who ſhould anſwer his call, were to be received into the covenant, in the ſame manner as thoſe, who had been called to it before, and that the Heathens ſhould ſhare in the ſame priviledges with the *Jews*, tho' the *Jews* had been in covenant with God, a great while before the Heathens. This our Saviour declares in theſe words,

* Matth. xx.

words, which conclude the parable; *ſo the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt.* Here is nothing that can be applied to thoſe Chriſtians, who delay their converſion. They are not in the ſame caſe with the labourers, who were ſent but late into the vineyard. Thoſe labourers went no ſooner, *becauſe no man had hired them*; but they went as ſoon as they were ſent. I ſay, Chriſtians are not in this caſe, ſince they have been called in the morning, and at all the hours of the day, being born and having always lived in the church.

I have been ſomewhat large in ſhewing how unreaſonable and dangerous the proceeding of thoſe men is, who pretend to repent only at the end of their lives. But all thoſe who put off their converſion, do not put it off ſo far. There are many who acknowledge, that it is dangerous to ſtay till the extremity, and that it is neceſſary to repent betimes; they propoſe to go about it in a little time, and they hope that they ſhall repent ſoon enough, not to be ſurprized by death under a total hardning; but in the mean while they do nothing toward their converſion.

This way of delaying, is an illuſion, which does not appear ſo groſs and dangerous as the former, becauſe it ſuppoſes ſome inclination to good. But yet it is no better than an artifice of the heart, a trick of ſelf-love, by which a man deceives and blinds himſelf. Nay, in ſome reſpects, the ſtate of theſe laſt, is more criminal and dangerous, than that of the firſt. It is more criminal, becauſe they do not what they approve of, and becauſe they ſin againſt the conſtant admonitions of their conſciences, and do not perform their reſolutions and their promiſes. But it is likewiſe more dangerous; for with this intention to repent in a little time, they think themſelves much better than thoſe who are reſolved to repent only upon their death-bed; they applaud themſelves for ſuch a ſenſe of piety as they have; and they judge, that if they are not quite in a ſtate of ſalvation, at leaſt they are not far from it. Now one may eaſily ſee that ſuch an opinion of themſelves, can only lay their conſciences aſleep, and inſpire them with preſumption and ſecurity.

But all theſe things conſidered, they go no farther with theſe good diſpoſitions, than thoſe, who without ſhuffling refer the whole matter to the end of their lives. All the difference is, that the latter do all at once, what the others do ſucceſſively. And therefore all that has been ſaid in this chapter, may almoſt be applied to theſe laſt. They run the ſame riſk with thoſe who deſign to repent only upon extremity, ſince death may ſurprize them before they have executed their good reſolutions. They have as little love for God, and are as much addicted to their luſts: that which deceives them, is, that they fancy, that there is in them a ſincere purpoſe of converſion. But if this intention is ſincere, how comes it to paſs that they do not repent? When a man is reſolved upon a thing, when his heart is in it, when he deſires it in good earneſt, he goes about it without loſing time.

But when a man uſes delays, it is a ſign that he is not well reſolved yet: a reſolution which no effect follows, is not a fixed and ſettled reſolution. This purpoſe of converſion, is therefore but one of thoſe wavering deſigns and projects, which are formed every day, but never accomplished. It is no more than a general and inactive intention, which may

may perhaps be found in all men. But other ſorts of purpoſes are neceſſary for a man who hopes to be ſaved. Salvation is not obtained by bare deſigns and projects, but by the actual practice of holineſs.

Now men might eaſily be undeceived, and convince themſelves of the un-ſincerity of all thoſe reſolutions they make in relation to repentance; if they did but reflect upon the time paſt, and aſk themſelves, Whether they have not been very near in the ſame ſentiments and reſolutions for ſome years together? And yet theſe ſentiments have produced nothing, and thoſe reſolutions have made no change in them; they are ſtill in the ſame ſtate, and perhaps farther from converſion than ever. Muſt not men blindfold themſelves, when they do not ſee, that it will ſtill be the ſame thing for the future, and that life will ſlip away in perpetual delays; for what can they promiſe to themſelves from the time to come, and what ground have they to hope that it will not be like the time paſt? Are they more firmly reſolved than they were before? When will this reſolution be put in practice? Will it be in a month, or in a year? They muſt confeſs, they do not know when it will be. So that when they promiſe to repent, they do not know what they promiſe; nay, they cannot tell whether they promiſe any thing. They will ſay perhaps, that they hope to confirm themſelves in a good purpoſe; but what do they found this hope upon? what do they wait for, and what new thing do they imagine will happen to them? Have they any aſſurance that God will uſe for their converſion, other means and motives than thoſe, which he has uſed already? Nay, how do they know but that they ſhall be deprived of thoſe means and helps which hitherto have been tender'd them? How can they tell whether there is a time to come for them, and whether their life is not juſt ready to end? All this is very uncertain. But what is certainly true is this, that through ſo many procraſtinations, their hearts grow harder, and their return to virtue becomes more difficult. The love of ſin increaſes by the habit of ſinning, and the means appointed to work repentance, loſe ſomething of their force every day.

Theſe conſiderations do evidently ſhew, that the deferring of converſion, is an error as groſs as it is dangerous.

I think it will not be uſeleſs to conclude this chapter, with obſerving that the reaſon why ſo many put off their converſion, is, becauſe they look upon repentance as an auſtere and melancholy duty. And this notion muſt needs put them upon deferring the practice of it. It is therefore of the greateſt moment, to deſtroy that prejudice; and to ſhew on the contrary, that if there is any ſad and deplorable condition, it is that of a man who lives in ſin. For that is either a ſtate of fear and uncertainty, or of ſecurity and inſenſibility. Such a man can have no ſolid peace of conſcience during his life, and what agitations muſt he fall into, when the thoughts of death and of a judgment to come happens to make ſome lively impreſſion upon his mind? For granting that then he may uſe ſome endeavour to diſpoſe himſelf to repentance; yet beſides the danger of a late repentance, it is a ſad thing to end one's life in thoſe ſtruggles and terrors, which muſt needs accompany ſuch a repentance. A man who delays his converſion, prolongs his miſery, and makes it greater and more incurable. But joy and tranquillity are the portion

portion of a pure conſcience. There is no felicity or contentment, like that of a ſoul which is freed from the bondage of ſin. Repentance is the beginning of that happineſs, which grows ſweeter and more perfect, according to the progreſs we make in virtue. Then it is that a man is happy in all the circumſtances of life, beſides that he has the comfort of being ſupported at the approaches of death, with that peace and joy, which flow from a well-grounded confidence in the Divine Mercy, from the teſtimony of a good conſcience, and from a ſteady hope of immortality.

CAUSE VII.

Men's Sloth and Negligence in Matters of Religion.

IT is natural and ordinary to men, to be unconcerned about thoſe things which they do not know, or of which they do not apprehend the uſe and neceſſity. And ſo we may eaſily conceive that men living in ignorance, and being poſſeſſed with thoſe notions I have now confuted, muſt needs be very negligent and ſlothful, in what relates to religion. But as this ſloth, conſidered in itſelf, is a viſible cauſe of corruption, ſo it will be fitting to take particular notice of it in this chapter.

I ſuppoſe, in the firſt place, that it is impoſſible for a man to attain the end which religion propoſes to him, without uſing the proper means which lead to that end. In religious as well as in worldly concerns, nothing is to be had without labour and care. As there are means appointed for preſerving the life of the body, ſo there are ſome ordained for maintaining the life of the ſoul; and the uſe of theſe laſt means, is of the two the more neceſſary, becauſe there is more care and forecaſt requiſite in order to ſalvation, about preſerving the life of the ſoul, than for ſupporting that of the body. It is certain that the more excellent any thing is, the more it requires our care; but beſides that we ſee the life of the body is eaſily preſerv'd; a natural inclination prompts us to thoſe things which are neceſſary for our ſubſiſtence, and the means of ſupplying our bodily wants, offer themſelves to us, as it were of their own accord. But it is not ſo with the ſpiritual life. Conſidering our proneneſs to evil, and the preſent ſtate we are in, we cannot avoid being undone, if we neglect the neceſſary care of our ſouls, and if we follow all the bents and propenſions of our nature. Religion obliges us upon many occaſions, to reſiſt our inclinations and to offer violence to our ſelves; it requires ſelf-denial, watchfulneſs and labour; it lays many duties upon us, and it preſcribes divers means, without the uſe of which, we cannot but continue ſtill in corruption and death: I ſhall then but juſt name the chiefeſt of thoſe duties and means.

Before all things, a Chriſtian ought to be inſtructed, he ought to know with ſome exactneſs, both the truth, and the duties of Chriſtianity:

nity: Now this knowledge cannot be acquired, without hearing, reading, meditation, or ſome other care of this nature. In the next place, as religion does not conſiſt in bare knowledge, but chiefly in practice; none of thoſe means ſhould be neglected, which are proper to divert men from vice, and to ſpur them on to virtue. Theſe means are very many, but they are all comprehended under theſe two principal heads; the exerciſes of devotion, and the circumſpections which every perſon ought to uſe.

The exerciſes of devotion are mighty helps to piety and ſalvation; I mean ſuch as meditation, reading, and particularly prayer, which is one of the moſt eſſential acts of religion, as well as one of the moſt efficacious means to advance holineſs. There are on the other hand ſeveral methods of circumſpection and care, which are of abſolute neceſſity: as for inſtance, the foreſeeing and ſhunning the occaſions which may draw us into ſin; the ſeeking thoſe opportunities and aids which promote piety, the not being over-much concerned about the body, the cheriſhing good thoughts, and the reſiſting evil ones: but above all, it is a thing of the greateſt importance, that every one ſhould endeavour thoroughly to know himſelf, which he cannot do, but by examining his preſent ſtate, and by reflecting ſeriouſly and frequently upon his actions and words, and upon the thoughts and motions of his heart. All theſe cares are eſſential and neceſſary. For without the uſe of thoſe means, it is as impoſſible to be religious and pious, as it would be to live and ſubſiſt without nouriſhment. A man who will neither eat nor drink, muſt needs die in a little time. And ſo the ſpiritual life will ſoon be extinct, if the only means which can ſupport it, are not uſed.

Let us now ſee, whether theſe cares and means which I have ſhewn to be neceſſary, are made uſe of. It is ſo viſible, that they are almoſt totally neglected, that I need not be very large upon the proof of it.

Men take little care of being inſtructed, and of getting information and knowledge about religion. The far greater part either cannot read, or never apply themſelves to any uſeful inſtructive reading. Few hearken to the inſtructions that are given them, and fewer yet examine or reflect upon them. Carnal luſts and ſecular buſineſs, do ſo engroſs them, that they ſeldom or never give themſelves to ſearching the truth. They generally have an averſion to ſpiritual things. Hence it is, that in matters of religion, they will rather believe implicitely what is told them, than be at the pains of enquiring, whether it is true or not. And they are every whit as careleſs about exerciſes of devotion. Many would think it a puniſhment if they were made to read or to meditate. They never do thoſe things, but with reluctancy and as ſeldom as they can. They go about prayer eſpecially with a ſtrange indifference, and a criminal indevotion. In ſhort, very few take the neceſſary care to preſerve themſelves from vice, and to behave themſelves with regularity and caution; very few ſeek the opportunities of doing good, and avoiding the temptations to which the common condition of men, or their own particular circumſtances expoſe them: and the greateſt number are ſlaves to their bodies, and wholly taken up with earthly things. One of the moſt ſenſible and fatal effects of this negligence is, that thoſe perſons uſe no manner of endeavours to know themſelves. It is very ſeldom if

ever that they reflect upon what paſſes within them; upon their thoughts, their inclinations, the motions of their hearts, and the principles they act upon; or that they take a review of their words and actions. They do not conſider whether they have within them the characters of good men, or of wicked and hypocritical perſons. In a word, almoſt all of them live without reflection.

Mens careleſsneſs about religion is therefore extreamly great. But they proceed otherwiſe in the things of the world, about which they are as active and laborious as they are lazy and cold in reference to true piety. They will do every thing for their bodies, and nothing for their ſouls. They ſpare no induſtry or diligence, they omit nothing to promote their temporal concerns. If we were to judge by their conduct, we would think that the ſupreme good is to be found in earthly advantages, and that ſalvation is the leaſt important of all things.

I need not ſay what effects ſuch a negligence muſt produce. The greater part of Chriſtians being ignorant in their duty, having no knowledge of themſelves, declining the uſe of thoſe means which God has appointed, and without which he declares that no man can be ſaved; and wearing out their lives in this ignorance and ſloth, it is not to be imagined, that they can have any religion or piety; and ſo there muſt be a general corruption amongſt them. I ſay, it muſt be ſo; unleſs God ſhould work miracles, or rather change the nature of man, and invert the order and the laws which he has eſtabliſhed.

But becauſe it might be ſaid that Chriſtians do not live like Atheiſts, and that their negligence is not ſo great as I repreſent it; let us conſider a little, what ſort of care they beſtow upon the concerns of their ſouls. Certainly there are ſome perſons who are not guilty of this negligence: but excepting theſe; what is it which the reſt of mankind do, in order to their ſalvation? Very little or nothing. They pray, they aſſiſt ſometimes at Divine-ſervice, and at the publick exerciſes of religion; they hear ſermons, they receive the ſacrament, and they perform ſome other duties of this nature. This is all which the religion of the greateſt part amounts to. But firſt theſe are not the only duties which ought to be practis'd; there are others which are not leſs eſſential, and which yet are generally neglected; ſuch as meditation, reading, ſelf-examination; to ſay nothing here of the duties of ſanctification. So that if ſome acts of religion are performed, others are quite omitted. The reaſon of this proceeding may eaſily be diſcovered. There is a law and a cuſtom, which oblige all perſons to ſome acts of religion; to pray, to receive the ſacrament, and to go now and then to church: if a man ſhould intirely neglect thoſe external duties, he would be thought an Atheiſt: but there is neither cuſtom, nor law, nor worldly decency, which obliges a man to meditate, to examine his own conſcience, or to watch over his conduct, and therefore theſe duties being left to every one's direction, are very little obſerved.

As to the other duties which Chriſtians perform in ſome meaſure, the want of ſincerity in them, does moſt commonly turn them into ſo many acts of hypocriſy. They perhaps ſay ſome prayers in the morning; but this is done without devotion, haſtily, with diſtraction, and wearineſs, and only to get rid of it; after, they think no more of God all the day,

but

but are altogether buſied about the world and their paſſions; and in the evening they pray with greater wandring of thoughts than in the morning. If it ſo fall out, that they go to church, or hear a ſermon, they do not give a quarter of an hour's cloſe attention to any thing that is ſaid, or done in the publick aſſemblies. In many places the whole devotion of the people conſiſts in being preſent at ſome ſermons, which are as little inſtructive, as they are minded or hearkned to. The uſe which is made of the ſacraments, eſpecially of the euchariſt, converts them into vain ceremonies, and makes them rather obſtacles, than helps to ſalvation. As to the mortifying of the body by reaſonable abſtinence, faſting and retirement, it is an unknown duty. The indifference of Chriſtians is therefore but too palpable. What they do upon the account of religion is very little; and yet they do that little ſo ill, that it is not much more beneficial to them than if they did nothing at all.

And now what might not be ſaid, if after having thus ſhewn, that what men do for their ſalvation is next to nothing; I ſhould undertake to prove, that they do almoſt every thing that is neceſſary for their damnation; and that they are zealous and induſtrious for their ruin, as they are ſlothful and negligent in what is requiſite to preſerve them. There are means to corrupt as well as to ſanctify our ſelves. The means of corruption and perdition, are ignorance, want of attention, neglect of devotion, the love of the world, and of the fleſh, unruly paſſions, temptations, and ill examples. Now ſuppoſing, that a man was ſo monſtrouſly frantick, as to form the deſign of damning himſelf; what would ſuch a man do? He would neglect the exerciſes of devotion, he would not pray at all, or he would pray only with his lips; he would profane the ſacraments by an unſanctify'd uſe of them; he would only mind his body and this preſent life; he would give looſe reins to his paſſions, as much as he might with decency and without danger; if he had an opportunity to gratify his ſenſuality, his covetouſneſs, his pride, or any other wicked affection, he would gladly embrace it. This is what a man would do to damn himſelf: and is it not what a great many actually do? I confeſs, no man is capable of ſo wild a reſolution, as to deſign to damn himſelf; but a man ſufficiently damns himſelf, when he takes no care of his ſalvation, and when he does thoſe things, which will infallibly bring his perdition after them.

The ſloth and negligence of men in the concerns of their ſouls, being one of the cauſes of their corruption, it would be highly neceſſary to remedy that negligence, and to inſpire them with zeal for religion; but it is hard to ſucceed in this, lazineſs is attended with a certain ſweetneſs to which men give up themſelves with pleaſure. The ſlothful do love and delight in reſt; they cannot endure to be egged on to labour. This is one of thoſe habits which are moſt difficult to be conquered; and to ſay the truth, there is but little hope of thoſe, in whom it is grown inveterate: it is a great taſk to rouze them out of that ſluggiſh and lethargick temper. God muſt interpoſe by a particular grace, by great afflictions, or by ſome other extraordinary method.

But yet, I do not think it altogether impoſſible to overcome this ſinful and dangerous ſloth, or to preſerve thoſe from it, whom it has not ſeized as yet. Serious reflections upon the importance of ſalvation, and

upon the neceſſity of working at it, may produce that effect. Men would not live in this careleſsneſs, but that they either do not apprehend of what conſequence it is to be ſaved; or that they imagine, there is not much to be done for the obtaining of ſalvation. Theſe two prejudices maintain their lazineſs. Nothing can therefore be more uſeful, than to convince them on the one hand, that nothing in the world is of greater moment than religion; and that eternal happineſs is the higheſt of all concernments: and to let them ſee on the other hand, that this felicity is not to be attained, but by aſſiduous care, and an exact obſervation of the duties of Chriſtianity.

I know that it is difficult to make men ſeriouſly enter upon theſe reflections; but yet they ought ſtill to be laid before them, and we ſhould not give over. If they have no effect at one time, there are circumſtances in which they will prove ſucceſsful. I think, few would continue in this ſluggiſh diſpoſition, if they did repreſent to themſelves what notions and thoughts they ſhall have at the end of their lives; every man is ſatisfy'd that he muſt die one day, and that his condition will then be the happieſt that can be conceived, if he has made uſe of the time and opportunities he had to ſecure his ſalvation; but that if he has neglected theſe means, he ſhall find himſelf in ſtrange agonies, and be reduced to diſmal extremities. When death appears, when the world vaniſhes, a man is then wholly taken up with religion, he would give then all the world, if it was in his poſſeſſion, to ſecure to himſelf a better life. Now ſince we all know that this muſt one day be our caſe, wiſdom requires, that we ſhould overcome betimes that negligence, of which the conſequences will be ſo fatal; and that we ſhould apply ourſelves with earneſtneſs and pleaſure to that work, upon which our ſovereign felicity depends.

CAUSE VIII.

Worldly Buſineſs.

NEGLIGENCE commonly proceeds, either from indifference, or from diſtraction. We neglect thoſe things which we look upon with indifference; but we frequently alſo neglect things of moment, becauſe we are diſtracted by other cares. Theſe are the two cauſes of men's careleſneſs in matters of religion. On the one hand, piety is indifferent to them, they neither know the nature nor the excellency of it; the duties which it preſcribes, do not appear very pleaſant or neceſſary to them; they love and eſteem only the things of the world, all this I have proved in the fore-going chapters. On the other hand, they are diſtracted by temporal cares, which rob them of the leiſure and freedom, that are neceſſary for the ſtudy and practice of religion. Worldly buſineſs therefore is another ſource of corruption, as I hope to prove it by the following conſiderations.

I reckon among worldly employments, all thoſe cares which relate to

the world, or this preſent life, whether they take up the body or the mind. There are temporal cares which properly take up the body; ſuch are the cares of mechanicks, or huſband-men; and there are other ſecular cares, which chiefly employ the mind; ſuch is the ſtudy of humane learning, of politicks, or philoſophy. Theſe laſt as well as the firſt, ought to be counted worldly buſineſs. Nay, we may obſerve that difference between theſe two ſorts of temporal employments; that the cares which take up the mind are ſometimes the more dangerous. While the body is at work, the mind may be at liberty; but when the mind is employed, when the heart is diſtracted and poſſeſſed with temporal cares, it is much harder for the thoughts of religion to enter, or to make any impreſſion upon a man.

But whether theſe employments relate to the mind or to the body, we ought not to think, that they are of themſelves hindrances to piety. For this imagination would be a very groſs error. Worldly buſineſs is lawful and neceſſary, and it were a ſin to neglect it, ſince that would be contrary to the order which God has eſtabliſhed in the world. Nay, it may be uſeful to our ſalvation, it may divert ill thoughts, it may take off men from trifling and vicious employments, and it may ſerve to mortify the body, and to baniſh idleneſs, which is the cauſe of all manner of vice.

I make this remark, becauſe ſome people fancy, that in order to be ſaved, it muſt be neceſſary to live in an abſolute retirement, to lay aſide all temporal cares, and to give up our ſelves wholly to ſpiritual exerciſes, to reading, contemplation, meditation and prayer. But thoſe who do thus ſtretch the obligation of renouncing the world, and inſiſt ſo much upon a retired and contemplative life, do not, I doubt, very well underſtand the nature of piety, nor do any great ſervice to it. Sometimes by endeavouring to ſpiritualize men too much, we ſpoil all, and we make piety appear ridiculous and impracticable. We ſhould always remember that piety is made for man. Now it is not one in fifty that can thus embrace retirement, and abſolutely renounce the world. I am far from condemning retirement; it is ſometimes very ſeaſonable, and I think it in ſome ſenſe neceſſary to all men. There are ſome perſons who for the ſake of their ſalvation, or the edification of the church, ought to chuſe a retired life, diſengaged from temporal cares. Others are called to that kind of life by the circumſtances which providence has placed them in. And beſides, there is no Chriſtian, but ought to allow himſelf ſome times of retirement; nay, there are ſome temporal employments which do not hinder a man to live in a retired manner. But after all, it would be the ruin of ſociety, and of moſt Chriſtian virtues, if every one ſhould live a-part, and buſy himſelf only in ſpiritual exerciſes. God does not require this; He has created man to labour in the world, and thoſe who follow an honeſt employment in it, act ſuitably to his will, and their buſineſs may prove a help to their ſalvation.

I need not, I think, advertiſe the reader that I ſpeak here only of lawful employments, and not of thoſe which are bad and contrary to the laws of nature or religion. And yet theſe laſt are very common; but becauſe every body may eaſily ſee that ſuch occupations muſt unavoidably engage men into ſin, I will make it my chief buſineſs to ſhew, that lawful and innocent employments, prove to many perſons a hindrance to piety and ſalvation.

Temporal employments then being not bad in themselves, they cannot occasion corruption but by the abuse that is made of them. Now there are four faults which men commit in this matter.

1. The first is, when they are intirely taken up with worldly things. We have shewed already, that men live in a prodigious sloth and carelessness about religion, and that they do almost nothing for their souls and their salvation. From this it follows, that they must be employ'd only about their bodies and the concerns of this life. And in fact, if we inquire into their cares, we shall find that they terminate in the world, and in their temporal interest, and this, I think, needs not be proved.

2. Their hearts sink too deep into the things of the world. The business of life is innocent when it is followed with moderation; but it diverts men from piety, when it is pursued more, and with greater eagerness than it deserves. That excessive love of the world makes the unhappiness of men. Instead of esteeming temporal goods in proportion to their worth, and as remembering that they are not able to procure them true felicity; instead of considering that they are not made for this life only, and that they cannot long enjoy those advantages which they court; they give up themselves wholly to the world, they set their hearts and affections upon it, and they act as if this life was the ultimate end of all their actions. They labour only for their bodies, and for the gratifying of their appetites. This is the mark aimed at in all their thoughts and projects: this is what inflames their desires, and what excites in them the most violent passions of grief or joy, of anxiety or impatience. They are far from having such a hearty concern for religion and piety. In relation to this, their affections are faint and languid, and they do nothing but with indifference, or by constraint.

3. The third fault is when men are too much employed, and when they over-load themselves with business. It is a great piece of wisdom, both in respect of the tranquility of this life and the concerns of another, to avoid the excess and the hurry of business, as much as possibly we may, without being wanting to the duties of our calling; to confine ourselves to necessary cares, and to wave all superfluous ones. Men would live happy if they did but know, what their profession requires of them, and limit themselves to it, without meddling in that which does not concern them. But here they observe no bounds; they will fly at all, they will busy themselves about many things, which do not belong to their province. This without doubt is a dangerous disease, and the occasion of several disorders.

4. In the last place, there is one thing more to blame, and that is when worldly business becomes an occasion of sin, by the abuse that is made of it. For besides that it is a very ill disposition in a Christian to be fond of the world; most men are so unhappy as to direct all the business of life to a bad end, which is to satisfy and to enflame the more their irregular appetites. And by this means, many enterprizes and particular actions of theirs, which in themselves are innocent, become evil and unlawful, and engage them in all manner of sins.

These considerations prove already, that the greatest part of men's vices proceeds from their temporal affairs; but this will appear yet more clearly by the following reflections.

1. This excessive application to temporal concerns, engrosses almost our

our whole time, so that it does not leave us a sufficient share of it, to be spent in cares of another nature. Men confess this themselves, and plead it for an excuse. They alledge their business. A man who is engaged in the world will say, *I have no time to read, or to perform the exercises of religion; I have too much business, my employ or my calling does not leave me a minute of leisure.* And the truth is, they are too busy for the most part. If they have any spare time, some hours, or some days of rest, wherein the course of their ordinary employments is interrupted: they are not in a condition, to improve to the best advantage those short intervals of relaxation.

2. And truly, secular business does not only take away the best part of men's time, but it does besides distract their minds and invade their hearts and affections. When for a whole day or week the mind and body have been in agitation, a man is weary and spent, the activity of his thoughts is exhausted, his head is too full to be clear, he is not able to drive away in an instant so many worldly ideas, to calm his passions, and to turn himself of the sudden, to spiritual exercises. So that he must either absolutely neglect the duties of piety, or perform them very ill. When a man has brought himself to a habit, of being employed only in worldly affairs, he is no longer master of his own thoughts and motions. It is with great difficulty, if he can at all apply himself to objects that are foreign to him. Those objects affect him but weakly; he must make great efforts, before he can fasten upon them; and if he fixes there for a few moments, it is a violent state in which he cannot continue long. Those thoughts, of which he is constantly full, crowd in upon him, and he returns immediately to those things which he loves, and which commonly take him up.

This is the true reason, why men love and relish spiritual things so little, and why they think it so hard to subdue their minds with reading, attention, and meditation. This is particularly the main source of indevotion in the exercises of piety. Why is the mind so apt to wander in prayer? The too great application to temporal affairs is the cause of it. As soon as a man is awake in the morning, a throng of thoughts and a multiplicity of designs and business break in upon his mind, and take possession of his heart; he is filled with these things all the day, he follows and plods upon them without distraction or interruption. And how is it to be imagined that amidst all this hurry and turmoil, he should find that recollection, that tranquility, and that elevation, without which the exercises of piety are but meer hypocrisy? Whence comes it to pass that men bring so little attention and sincerity with them, to the publick worship of God? Why do sermons produce so little fruit? Why do the most certain and important truths of religion, the clearest and the most solid reasonings, make either no impression at all, or at least no lasting one upon the hearers? What is the reason why, in the most solemn devotions, and particularly in the holy communion, it is so difficult for men to lift up their hearts to God, and to shake off a thousand idle or sinful thoughts, which come then to amuse and distract them? And lastly, Why do those vows and promises which are made even with some sincerity, prove so ineffectual? Why do the best resolutions vanish so easily and so soon? All this comes from men's being too much taken up with temporal cares.

3. These excessive cares do not only distract the mind, but they do besides directly obstruct sanctification, and lead men into sin. For first it is impossible to love religion and virtue, when the heart is set upon the world. Our Saviour tells us, * *That no man can serve two masters*; and St. *John* declares, † *That the love of God is not in those who love the world.* There is such an opposition between bodily and spiritual exercises, that those who give themselves up to the first, are incapable of the others. Worldly occupations render men carnal, sensual and dull; they keep up ignorance and foment sloth, and they weigh down all their inclinations and thoughts, to the earth, so that they must be careless and indifferent, about spiritual objects and heavenly concerns. And indeed they are very ill disposed to value those good things as they deserve; or to seek them with that eagerness and sincerity which they ought. Can we think that men, who propose nothing else to themselves, but the amassing of wealth, the making their court, or the canvassing for places; and who live and toil only for such things, should have a due sense of the concerns of their salvation? It is hard to imagine it.

But further, religion does not allow Christians to love the world, or to cleave to it. ‡ It requires, that *they should possess temporal goods as not possessing them*, and that *they should use the world, as not abusing it*; because on the one hand, *the figure of the world passes away*, and it would be a folly to fix their hearts upon vain and transitory enjoyments: and on the other hand, they ought to aspire chiefly to the possession of solid and eternal happiness. To be therefore taken up only with earthly things, and to let them enter too deep into one's heart, is a disposition quite contrary to that, which a Christian ought to be in.

4. Lastly, An excessive application to temporal affairs hurries a man into many disorders. We need but reflect a little, to be satisfied that a man who is filled only, with the thoughts and solicitudes of this life, must be a slave to his senses and passions; and that he lays himself open every moment to a thousand temptations, which he is not able to withstand. Though his employments are lawful in themselves, yet he makes them criminal, because to him they are only means of gratifying his appetites. And the greatest mischief is, that when a man is once entered upon that course, he still confirms himself in it, so that at last he cannot leave it off. On the one hand, his passions are still mounting higher; on the other, business and toil grow upon him. He first proposes an end to himself, and then he will bring it about at any rate, as being engaged in honour and by interest not to desist. If he meets with obstacles he will do any thing to surmount them. If he succeeds, success animates him with new ardour; he is for going further: in a word, it is an endless labour, a continual succession of cares, which are still growing greater, and which end only with his life.

From all this we may conclude, that the abuse of worldly business is most dangerous, and that if we would not have it obstruct our salvation, we ought to observe these three rules.

The first is, That we should pursue the things of this world with moderation. One of the most useful directions for a happy life, is this; To lay

* Matth. vi. 24. † 1 John ii. 15.
‡ 1 Cor. vii. 31.

lay nothing too much to heart. The way to preſerve our innocence and tranquility, is to crave nothing too eagerly: not to rejoyce exceſſively at any proſperity, not to be dejected above meaſure for any diſaſters which may happen, and not to be too hot and peremptory upon any deſign. The ſecond caution to be uſed, is the avoiding multiplicity of buſineſs, and exceſs of employments, as much as is conſiſtent with the duties of our calling. Every one ſhould conſider what he is fit for, and what he is called to, and go no farther. In the laſt place, wiſdom requires, that among all the affairs of this life, we ſhould reſerve the neceſſary time and care, to pay what we owe to God, and to mind our ſalvation, the moſt important of all concerns. To this end, it is very uſeful, to have certain times of retirement and leiſure, and to accuſtom our ſelves to make now and then, even in the midſt of temporal employments, ſuch reflections as may call us back to our duty, and be like a counterpoiſe to that byaſs which carries us toward ſenſible objects. Let us often think that we are mortal, that we have a ſoul, and that there is another life after this. Let us conſider what all our worldly cares terminate in, and what judgment we ſhall make of them upon our death-beds. Theſe reflections will put us upon wiſe and moderate courſes, and ſo we ſhall avoid innumerable diſorders and miſeries which men fall into, by their too great application to temporal buſineſs.

CAUSE IX.

Men's particular Callings.

THO' we have ſeen already that corruption has its ſource in the abuſe of worldly buſineſs, yet it may be proper to inſiſt a little more upon this matter, and to conſider it with relation to the different ſtates and callings which men are engaged in. When we ſpeak of worldly buſineſs, we mean chiefly thoſe things, about which the greateſt part of life is ſpent. Now thoſe occupations muſt needs be ſuitable to the particular kind of life which a man follows. And ſo every man's kind of life, may be a ſource, or at leaſt an accidental cauſe of corruption.

As the world is conſtituted, it is neceſſary that there ſhould be different profeſſions among men, that ſome ſhould cultivate the earth, that others ſhould apply themſelves to arts and trades, and that others ſhould exerciſe magiſtracy or traffick. The difference of ſex, age, condition, and other circumſtances, creates a great variety in relation to particular callings. Now this diverſity of employs and conditions, is innocent in it ſelf; the world ſubſiſts, and ſociety is preſerv'd by it. But yet it cannot be denied, but that a great part of the diſorders, which happen in the world, proceeds from the kind of life which men chuſe, and from the particular ſtate they are in; and that becauſe they abuſe it, and do not demean themſelves in it, with caution and prudence. The proof of this ſhall conclude the firſt part of this treatiſe.

But

But here we are to uſe ſome diſtinction. There are callings which are bad in themſelves, and others which are lawful and innocent; they are not all therefore equally dangerous, and ſome produce corruption, more neceſſarily than others.

All profeſſions, or callings, are not lawful, ſome are unlawful and criminal. The world is full of people, who make ſin it ſelf their ordinary calling and profeſſion. There are infinite numbers, who inſtead of following an honeſt employment, ſubſiſt only by the ſins which they commit themſelves, or which they make others commit. This might eaſily be proved by abundance of inſtances. How many are there, whoſe trade is a conſtant practice of obſcenity, lewdneſs and debauchery, of artifice and intrigue, lying and knavery? How many are there, who are profeſſed extortioners and cheats, who are always employed in acts of injuſtice, cruelty and violence? nay, there are ſocieties form'd for that purpoſe; the trade of robbing, of puniſhing the innocent, and that by committing rapine by ſea and land, is erected into an honourable and lawful employment. Many perſons are ſuffered at this day among Chriſtians, whoſe profeſſion was formerly counted infamous: many are tolerated, who are only miniſters of voluptuouſneſs, and whoſe only buſineſs it is to introduce licentiouſneſs of manners, to corrupt the youth by training them up to the love of pleaſure, and to a luxurious and effeminate life; and to furniſh thoſe who are inclined to debauchery, ſenſuality, idleneſs, or gaming, with the means to gratify their inclinations. Now all theſe profeſſions are not only inſeparable from ſin, but they likewiſe make way for all kinds of vice among Chriſtians.

We ought to paſs almoſt the ſame judgment upon the way of living of thoſe, who without making a publick profeſſion of vice, propoſe no other end to themſelves in this world, but the pleaſing of their appetites. Some have no other view, than to enjoy the pleaſures of life, and they level their whole conduct at that mark. Others deſiring to grow rich, or to raiſe themſelves to honours, make no ſcruple of uſing all the means, which intereſt, ambition and injuſtice, have eſtabliſhed in the world. They make uſe of fraud, violence and oppreſſion; it is their maxim and their ſtudy to diſſemble their ſentiments, and to do miſchief to thoſe who ſtand in their way. In a word, they betake themſelves to every thing that may further the ſucceſs of their deſigns. Such a method of life, is manifeſtly contrary to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and it muſt needs be highly ſinful, ſince both the end of it, and the means uſed to obtain that end, are ſo.

There are other kinds of life, which do not ſeem altogether ſo bad, and yet are not much better. This may particularly be ſaid of idleneſs. The profeſſion of many, is to have none at all, and to be as little employed as they can. They think it the happieſt of all conditions to have nothing to do, and to live at reſt and free from action. But yet it is unworthy of a man, and much more of a Chriſtian, to be uſeleſs in the world. And if this idleneſs is ſhameful and culpable in it ſelf, it is much more ſo in its effects and conſequences. It betrays men into frivolous or dangerous paſtimes. For a man cannot be perfectly idle. The want of uſeful buſineſs muſt be ſupplied with amuſements; and thoſe amuſements are generally ſinful. Thus we ſee multitudes of people, who

who excepting the time which they muſt needs beſtow upon the neceſſities of nature, and upon ſome external and indiſpenſable acts of religion, conſume the beſt part of their lives at play, or in diverſions, in unprofitable reading and converſations, in meeting companies, in receiving or returning viſits, or in other ſuch things, which tho' they are thought innocent, yet they enervate the mind, they devour time, they enſlave a man to the opinions and modes of the world, and they make him moſt frequently tranſgreſs the laws of religion. It would not be difficult to apply this to *profeſſed* gameſters, to thoſe who ſpend their time in trifling diſcourſes and impertinent viſits, and to many other perſons. I might eaſily ſhew, if it was neceſſary, that ſuch a life has little of Chriſtianity in it, and that it is a great deal more to blame, than is commonly believed.

Thus men follow divers kinds of life, which are eſſentially bad, and wherein by conſequence, purity of heart, and innocency of life, cannot be preſerv'd.

As to thoſe kinds of life and occupations which are lawful, I might obſerve in the firſt place, that for the moſt part men are too much wedded to them, and that they commonly abuſe them. But I will not preſs this conſideration, having ſhewn already in the foregoing chapter, that too great application to temporal affairs, robs men both of the time, and of that inclination and freedom which are neceſſary to mind ſpiritual things, and that it makes them dull, earthly-minded, ſenſual and ſlaves to their paſſions. To ſpeak then only of what concerns particular callings, I ſhall obſerve theſe two general faults.

1. It is a great miſchief that men embrace profeſſions which are not fit for them. Every profeſſion require ſome particular qualifications and talents; and ſince all men have not thoſe qualifications, it follows that all men are not fit for all employments, and that diſtinction and choice are to be us'd in pitching upon a profeſſion. The welfare of ſocieties and of particular perſons, does in a great meaſure depend upon that choice. If no care is taken of this, employments muſt be ill diſcharged, and from thence a great many diſorders will ariſe both in church and ſtate.

Now if we take a ſurvey of the different callings which men are engaged in, we will find that they are often deſtitute of thoſe qualifications which are neceſſary for the right diſcharging of them. And the worſt of it is that this happens in the moſt conſiderable employments, and in thoſe which might contribute moſt to the preſerving of order, and the encouraging of virtue in the world. As to profeſſions of leſſer importance, the choice is much eaſier; every body almoſt is capable of them, and the faults which may be committed there are not of great conſequence. If a huſband-man does not well underſtand his buſineſs, or a mechanick his trade, no great inconveniency will enſue from thence in relation to ſociety. But when publick employments are in the hands of men who are not qualified for them, it is hard to tell how much miſchief is occaſioned by it. Is it not for inſtance a lamentable thing, that ſo many perſons ſhould dedicate themſelves to the church, who want the talents requiſite for ſo high a function; and that ſo many who might do great ſervice in that profeſſion do not embrace it? By this it happens that ſome of thoſe who are placed at the helm in ſeveral churches, want both

both learning and probity, and that religion is very ill administred, so that the people being without instruction or conduct, live in ignorance and disorder. The same may be said of the office of magistrates, when it is entrusted to those who are not proper for it.

2. Lawful callings may prove great occasions of corruption and disorder, both in respect of those who embrace them, and of the publick, when they are ill exercised, when the duties annexed to them are neglected; when men do not watch against the temptations which are particular to them, and when they look upon them only as means to gratify their inclinations, to get money, to have a rank, to gain credit, or to humour some other passion. I might enter here upon many particulars, but because this would lead me too far, I shall confine my self to a few instances.

It would be very proper to speak here of the profession of church-men, and of the office of princes, magistrates and judges, and to shew how pernicious both these kinds of life prove often, not only to those who are raised to them, but likewise to church and state. But these two articles are of too great moment, to be touched upon only by the by. They are two general causes of corruption, which deserve to be purposely handled, and which are to have a place in the second part of this book.

The profession of military men, is a kind of life which corrupts vast multitudes. I do not condemn the profession in general. It is lawful, a man may live in it like a Christian, and there are persons in military employments, of a solid virtue and an exemplary piety. But it must be confess'd, that the number of those persons is not great; and that for the generality, the maxims and deportment of the men of that profession, agree very little with the rules of Christianity. Those who follow the employments of war, are for the most part men of loose and vicious principles. Every body knows, that if on the one hand some good men are found to embrace this profession, on the other hand it is the ordinary receptacle, and the last shift, of idle and debauched people; and of those who are over-whelmed with poverty and misery. Besides, how do men live in that profession? saving some few disorders which military discipline does not allow of, every thing is lawful there; I speak of what is commonly observed. To spend their life in idleness and gaming, is the least fault of soldiers. Lewdness is a thing about which no great scruple is made among them. The same might also be said of injustice; it is well known that commonly officers do not thrive but the soldiers pay for it. I say nothing of unjust wars, nor of the cruelty and inhumanity which often attend that kind of life, because I will not enlarge upon this subject. But it is most certain, and every considering person will own, that after the rate that military men live almost every where; war is the school of vice, and that the prodigious number of those, who follow that employment, is one of the principal causes of corruption and debauchery.

Commerce is one of the most lawful and necessary professions of life. Not only society, but religion it self may reap great advantages from it. But yet this calling has its dangers and temptations, and it is exercised by many in a way which is contrary to good conscience. As the only end of traffick is gain, and as the opportunities of getting by unlawful methods, which may be practised with impunity, offer themselves every day;

ay; ſo it is evident, that if a merchant has not a ſtrict and well-in-rmed conſcience, and virtue enough to reſiſt the perpetual temptations which his calling expoſes him, he will forfeit his innocence, and vio-te every minute the rules of juſtice and equity, of charity, truth and oneſty.

There are few callings more innocent and more ſuitable to the order hich God did eſtabliſh at firſt, than the employments of thoſe who exer-ſe mechanick trades, and get their livelihood by bodily labour. And et this kind of life proves to a great many an occaſion to vice, becauſe hey do not arm themſelves againſt the temptations and ſins which are rdinary in thoſe callings. It is almoſt the general character of this or-er of men, to mind nothing but the world, to labour only for their bo-ies, and to do nothing for their ſouls. Hence it is, that they are igno-ant, that they know their religion very little, that they are groſs, ſenſual, iven to intemperance, and ſeveral other exceſſes. They are apt beſides, o be unjuſt and falſe. They make no conſcience of doing their work l, of lying, and detaining what is not theirs. There is a thouſand etty frauds and little knaviſh tricks, uſed in every trade, which are hought innocent and lawful ways of gain. Now it is plain, that all this oes not contribute a little towards corruption.

What I have ſaid of the employments of life, may be applied to the ifferent ſtates men are in, with relation to age, condition, and their way f living. All theſe are ſo many occaſions and circumſtances, which may ivert them from their duty.

Thus youth has its particular temptations. Young people are vain, reſumptuous, ſenſual, given to pleaſure, violent and bold in their paſ-ions. They are likewiſe imprudent and fickle, becauſe they want know-edge and experience. Being thus diſpoſed at that age, they will almoſt nfallibly, unleſs prevented by a good education, corrupt themſelves, and ontract ill habits, which will ſtick by them, as long as they live. Daily xperience ſhews us, that youth ill ſpent is the ſource of the corruption f a great many for the reſt of their whole life.

Old people are commonly covetous, moroſe, ſuſpicious, wedded to the pinions they have once embraced, and moſt deeply engaged in their vi-ious cuſtoms. Their paſſions are not ſo boiſterous, but they are more aſting and harder to be cured, than thoſe of young people. And from his we may judge, that if reaſon and religion do not correct thoſe faults f old people; that age, which ought chiefly to be employed in prepar-ng for death, will prove an obſtacle to piety and ſalvation.

The rich, at St. *Paul* obſerves *, are proud and high-minded; they are pt beſides to be ſlothful, they love to ſatisfie their paſſions, are full of elf love, minding themſelves in every thing, and being little affected vith the miſeries of others. So that riches may eaſily ſpoil thoſe who oſſeſs them, and do actually ſpoil many.

The poor are almoſt all of them vicious, becauſe they are ignorant, orſaken from their infancy, and grown up in want and idleneſs, and mong bad company. They have little religion, they will live without orking, they are given to ſtealing and dishoneſty. Envy fills their hearts,

* Tim. vi. 17.

hearts, and they only keep within the bounds of duty, when they can c no miſchief.

Thoſe who live un-confined and much in the world, have for t moſt part little of a Chriſtian character. They lie open to abundanc of temptations, and what is moſt dangerous in that kind of life, is, th a man has no ſooner embraced it, but he thinks it honourable, lawfu and neceſſary; he hearkens no longer to the rules of religion, he aſhamed of them, and governs himſelf only by the maxims of the worl Others lead a retired life, they avoid great companies, and they ſeldor appear in publick. That ſtate may have its advantages, but it has i dangers too. Thoſe who live thus retired, are apt to think themſelve much better than other men, becauſe their conduct ſeems regular an free from ſcandal; and this inſpires them with a ſecret pride, a grea opinion of themſelves, an auſtere and imperious humour, which make them apt to ſpeak ill and to judge raſhly of other people, and this drive charity, gentleneſs, and humility out of their hearts.

I think I have ſaid enough to ſhew, that men's various kinds of life have a general influence upon the irregularities of their deportmen But to make this truth yet more evident, I ſhall add two reflections to a that has been ſaid.

The firſt is, that of all the temptations which are apt to ſeduce men none are more dangerous than thoſe, which are, 1. Neceſſary and una voidable. 2. Ordinary and frequent. 3. Hidden and imperceptible Now the temptations ariſing from men's particular callings have thes three characters. 1. They are neceſſary and unavoidable, we may with ſtand them, but we cannot avoid altogether being expoſed to them. 2 They are frequent and conſtant, thoſe employments in which the greate part of our lives is ſpent, offering them to us perpetually. 3. They ar hidden and imperceptible; for beſides that men reflect little upon what i ordinary and happens every day; thoſe temptations are varniſhed with the ſpecious pretences of example and cuſtom, and even of the lawful neſs of the calling and of neceſſity. Thus a trades-man, is neceſſarily expoſed to the danger of wronging his neighbour, and of tranſgreſſing the rules of juſtice, equity or ſincerity: the opportunity of doing thi returns every minute, and as often as he buys or ſells; this temptation i imperceptible, and except he has a niceneſs of conſcience, he will not be ſenſible of it, by reaſon that his profeſſion is innocent, that he is allowed to get, and that moſt of the unlawful ways of gain are authorized by cuſtom.

2. The ſecond reflection is, that the greateſt and the moſt inſuperable obſtacles to piety, proceed, for the moſt part, from a man's calling. It is that which obſtructs more than any thing elſe, the effect of the goſpel, and men's converſion. We preach, we exhort to repentance. But to whom do we ſpeak? We ſpeak to men engaged in profeſſions, which, conſidering how they behave themſelves in them, divert them from piety, and furniſh them with a thouſand opportunities of ſinning. We ſpeak to people who have choſen already the courſe of their whole life; who reſolved to continue in the ſtate they are in, and to alter nothing in it; and who have formed to themſelves, that ſcheme of employments, which

they

hey intend to follow at any rate. We preach to people who are no ooner out of the church, but they meet at home and in their ordinary uſineſs, with perpetual hindrances to holineſs, and with temptations, vhich it is certain they will not withſtand. Such hearers may be preached o long enough, before they reap any fruit from what they hear. Sermons are preſently gone; but the temptations ariſing from the profeſſions vhich men chuſe, are continual, and laſt as long as their lives. They ccompany a man every where, he is not jealous of them, he ſeeks them, he gives up himſelf to them, and he fancies he may lawfully do ſo. This s the viſible occaſion of the goſpel's having ſo little efficacy upon men's ninds.

I ſhall conclude this chapter with two remarks which may ſerve for a emedy againſt this ſource of corruption. 1. Every one ought to examine he ſtate and kind of life he is in; that if this ſtate has ſomething in it that s evil or contrary to the duty of a Chriſtian, he muſt alter and correct it. f the profeſſion is bad in it ſelf, nothing elſe can be done, but to quit t. If it is lawful, we muſt take care not to render it dangerous or ſinful, either by neglecting the duties to which it obliges us, or by not voiding the ſnares and temptations that attend it, or by making it an occaſion and pretence, to ſatisfie our inordinate affections. I confeſs we may neet here with difficulties. It is hard for a man to leave off a profeſſion, o go out of his ordinary road of life, and to renounce ſome engagements vhen they are once formed. And yet this ought and may be done, if hoſe engagements are not lawful. It is better we ſhould offer ſome violence to our ſelves, by breaking them off, or by correcting what is miſs in them, than to run our ſelves into infinite miſeries. But the beſt vay is to obviate the evil in its beginning.

Therefore, I ſay, 2*dly*. That ſince people uſe to reſolve upon a profeſion while they are young; that choice requires a great deal of prudence nd caution; for no leſs than temporal and eternal happineſs or miſery lepends upon it. But it is a ſad thing to ſee, how raſhly and inconſiderately this matter is gone about. Intereſt, chance, paſſion, the humour of parents or of young people, are the things which determine ſo important a choice. It is not much conſidered whether a calling is lawful, or proper for him that embraces it; little or no care is taken to form the inclinations of young perſons; they are given up to their own conduct, nd to all the temptations of that profeſſion to which they are deſtined. And thus we need no longer wonder, why employments are ill diſcharged, why moſt people loſe their innocence in them, and why there is a general corruption to be obſerved, in all ſtates and conditions. This is the ordinary effect and conſequence of men's particular callings.

A

TREATISE

CONCERNING THE

CAUSES

OF THE

PRESENT CORRUPTION

OF

CHRISTIANS,

AND THE REMEDIES THEREOF.

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH it cannot be conteſted, but that the Corruption of Chriſtians proceeds from thoſe Cauſes, which have been obſerved in the Firſt Part of this Work; yet thoſe Cauſes are not the only ſprings from which Corruption flows: there are others beſides, which we are to diſcover now, and which deſerve our moſt ſerious attention.

Hitherto we have found the Cauſes of Corruption, in the ill diſpoſition of Chriſtians. But thoſe which will be the ſubject matter of this Second Part, are of another nature. They are more general and of a greater influence, and they may be looked upon as the occaſions of the

the others. For if it be asked, Why men are ignorant, full of prejudices, possessed with false maxims, or negligence in the concerns of their salvation; we may easily see that this proceeds chiefly, from the want of Order and Discipline, from the defects of Pastors and Magistrates, from Education, and from those other Causes, which I design to enquire into, at present. Things are upon such a foot among Christians in relation to these heads, that it is almost impossible but that the Corruption of men must be very great; and we must not hope to stem the tide of it, unless we remove those publick, and general Causes of Corruption.

In the next place these Causes are less known, and less observed than the others. I cannot tell whether it is because they are not thought of, or because no remedy is hoped for; but men do not appear very solicitous to remove them, nor do they seem to known them. Great endeavours are used in Books and pulpits, to instruct men and to bring them to a more Christian life: matters of religion and morality are carefully explained, but this does not heal the general disorders. The main Causes of remissness do still subsist, and hinder the effects of instructions and exhortations. It were therefore to be wished, that those who are concerned for the restoring of Christianity, had larger views, and did more diligently labour to take away the general Causes of Corruption.

Indeed it seems more difficult to remedy these I am now to mention, than the first General Abuses are hardly reformed, especially when they are confirmed by a long custom; and to attempt it may be thought a fruitless labour. But all this ought not to discourage us. Truths so important as these are, ought not to be suppressed; they may produce their fruit in their season, it is still a great matter to have set them in the best light we can: and this is what I shall endeavour to do at present.

PART II.

CAUSE I.

The present State of the Church, and of Religion in general.

PIETY is always necessary, and the practice of it is never impossible, to those who are well inclined. But yet we must confess, that the various circumstances of time, place, and of the state of religion, contribute much to the progress of piety or of corruption in the world. There are some happy circumstances, and sometimes very favourable to piety; as on the other hand there are unhappy

circumſtances and times in which it is like a ſtranger upon earth, the means to promote it being then neither ſo effectual nor ſo frequent. The deſign of this work, obliges me to conſider, what may be thought in this reſpect of the time we live in, and whether this Corruption which diſhonours Chriſtianity, does not proceed from the unhappineſs of the times, and from the preſent ſtate of the Church and religion.

But we cannot ſucceed in this enquiry, nor paſs a ſound judgment upon the preſent ſtate of religion, without running back to its firſt origin and nature, and without taking a view of thoſe ages which are elapſed, ſince its firſt eſtabliſhment. The knowledge of the ſcripture and of hiſtory are here of great uſe. The ſcripture informs us what the ſtate of religion ſhould be, and hiſtory ſhews us the different ſtates thro' which it has paſſed. When we examine religion by theſe two rules, we perceive that it neither has been, nor will be, always in the ſtate it is now in.

It is fit in the firſt place to ſeek the true notion of the Chriſtian Church and religion in ſcripture. There it is that Chriſtianity ſtill ſubſiſts in all its beauty, for neither the ages which are paſt, nor the changes which have happen'd, have been able to tarniſh in the leaſt, the brightneſs of thoſe native and lively colours, in which our Saviour's religion is ſet forth in holy writings. We may take notice of four principal characters in the idea which the ſcripture gives us of the Chriſtian Church and religion; and theſe are, truth, holineſs, union and order.

1. The firſt and the chief character of this Church and religion, is the knowledge and the profeſſion of the truth; this is what diſtinguiſhes Chriſtianity from falſe religions. The Church is the Church of Chriſt no longer, than while ſhe retains the purity of faith and of evangelical doctrine. It would be needleſs to prove this.

2. The ſacred writers repreſent the Church as a ſociety altogether holy. They name her * *The ſpouſe of Chriſt, a glorious ſpouſe, having neither ſpot nor wrinkle nor any ſuch thing, but being holy and without blemiſh.* They call her † *The houſe of the living God, a holy nation, and the aſſembly of the firſt born which are written in heaven.* They give to Chriſtians, the glorious titles of *kings, prieſts, ſaints, elect, children of God*, and *new men*; they ſpeak of them, as a people ſeparated from the world and its vices, dedicated to God and good works, and living in the practice of piety, temperance, juſtice, charity, and all other virtues.

3. Union and Love is the third character of the Church and of the true Diſciples of Chriſt. The ſcripture does not ſpeak to us of many Churches but of one, of which all the faithful are members, in what place ſoever they may be. St. *Paul* ſays that there is but *one faith, one baptiſm, and one God*; the Apoſtles enjoyn above all things, Union and Charity, and they give many precepts to maintain theſe, and to make them flouriſh among Chriſtians.

4. As Holineſs and Union cannot be preſerved, where there is no order; ſo the Church was to be a well regulated ſociety in which every thing might be done in a convenient and orderly manner. And in fact, there are in the ſacred writings many laws to this purpoſe. We find there ſeveral regulations, concerning the way in which the Church ought

* Eph. v. 27. Pet. ii. † Heb. xii.

ought to be governed, and concerning the calling of Bishops and pastors, and the principal functions of their office. The scripture does besides appoint the exercise of discipline, the manner of proceeding in relation to scandalous sinners, and the administration of publick alms. It prescribes the chief acts of religion and divine worship, prayers, fasting, sacraments, preaching, and some other heads. All these laws are designed to establish order and piety in the Church, and to banish confusion and scandals out of it. And this order cannot be a thing indifferent, since the Apostles have given us laws about it.

It is not difficult to shew that most Christian societies are hardly to be known by these marks. But before we come to that, it is necessary to observe the different states through which the Church has passed from her infancy to this time.

II. If we consider the Church in her infancy, we must acknowledge, that the first ages of Christianity were very pure, in comparison of the following. But yet we must take heed, when we speak of the purity of the primitive Church, that we do not form to ourselves too advantageous an idea of it, as if Christianity had been then in its utmost purity and perfection. The Church in her beginnings did consist of Jews and Heathens. These men embracing Christianity, did not so entirely strip themselves of their prejudices and customs, but that they brought with them into the Church some of the notions of Judaism, and even of Gentilism. It is well known that this was the first occasion of those heresies which did stain the purity of the Christian doctrines, and morals, and the cause of several disorders, which happened in the very times of the Apostles. Besides, the Apostles and the first ministers of the Christian religion, were not able, by reason of the persecution and of the obstacles they met with, to regulate all things as they would have done, if the Church had been in peace. We need not therefore wonder if we find imperfections and defects apparent enough, in the state of the primitive Church. And it is of some importance, to observe this, not only that we may have true apprehensions concerning this matter, but that we may besides obviate an unhappy consequence, which might be drawn in favour of the present corruption, from what has been known in the first ages of Christianity. No doubt but there were disorders and scandals at that time; but we are to remember, that the Church was then made up of men, who for the most part were born, and had lived in Paganism, and whose life had been spent in the thickest darkness of ignorance and vice.

Yet for all that the Church was then more holy and pure than she has been since, or is at this day in most places. This is matter of fact which cannot reasonably be contested; for besides that it may be verified, from the testimony which the sacred, and some of the heathen authors bear to the innocency of the primitive Christians, and that it is probable, that men were kept in awe while the Apostles were alive in the time of miracles, besides all this I say, there are two considerations which prove, that corruption could not be then so great or so general, as it is now.

These considerations are founded upon two undeniable facts. 1. That the Church was then persecuted. And 2. That discipline was then exer-

ciſed in it. Theſe were two powerful means to remove vices and ſcandals from the Church. We may eaſily imagine, that men who loved the world and their ſins, would not have embraced Chriſtianity at a time, when whoſoever became a Chriſtian, did by that very thing expoſe himſelf to perſecution, torments and death. This did fright away the greateſt numbers of wicked and impious perſons. But if any of theſe entred into the Church, diſcipline for the moſt part drove them out, when they made themſelves notorious by a ſcandalous life. It is eaſy to judge, that in ſuch circumſtances there was more piety at that time, than we obſerve now in the Church. The firſt Chriſtians were ſincere in their profeſſion. Being inſtructed by the Apoſtles, and apoſtolical men, they placed the Chriſtian religion chiefly in a good life, to which they did ſolemnly engage themſelves by baptiſm. They were united among themſelves; they governed themſelves in matters of order and diſcipline by the preſcripts of the Apoſtles, as much as the perſecution gave them leave; and they did with courage lay down their lives for the truth. Such was the Chriſtianity of the firſt ages.

But the Church did not continue long in that ſtate before this zeal of thoſe primitive Chriſtians began to cool. On the one hand perſecution ceas'd, and on the other, the ancient diſcipline was ſlackned. Theſe two fences being pluckt up, and the emperors turning Chriſtians, the corruption of the world broke in upon the Church. Divers abuſes crept into doctrine, diſcipline, worſhip and manners, till the Church fell at laſt, into ſuch a diſmal darkneſs of ignorance, ſuperſtition and vice, that Chriſtianity ſeem'd almoſt quite extinct and deſtroyed. All thoſe who had any true ſenſe of religion, did lament this; they complained openly of it, and they longed for a good reformation. This was the ſtate which the Church and Religion were in, for ſome centuries.

It did not pleaſe God that thoſe times of ignorance ſhould laſt for ever; that darkneſs began to be diſpers'd in the laſt century. Then it was that learning and languages revived, and that the holy Scripture, which had been for a great while, a book unknown to the people, was reſcu'd out of that obſcurity, in which the barbariſm of former ages had buried it. Men did perceive that divers errors had been introduced into religion; they diſcovered ſeveral abuſes, they went about to redreſs them, and they ſucceeded ſo far, that in this reſpect, Chriſtianity was reſtored to its purity. But that great work could not be finiſhed; ſo that at this day the Church and religion, are not yet brought to that ſtate of perfection which they might be in.

III. For to come now to the preſent ſtate of religion, it is certain, Firſt, that many Chriſtian Churches are ſtill very near in the ſame darkneſs, men were in ſome ages ago. I ſhall ſay nothing of the ſinking of Chriſtianity in *Aſia* and *Africa*; there is more knowledge in *Europe*; but yet in many places we may obſerve almoſt all thoſe diſorders, which prevailed in the times of the groſſeſt ignorance. Nay, our age is more unhappy than the precedent, in that thoſe abuſes have been confirmed and authorized by laws, and are now ſupported by force. How many countries and Churches are there, where the people know almoſt nothing of the Goſpel, where religion is reduced to childiſh and ſuperſtitious devotions and practices, where the moſt ridiculous things are believed,

lieved, and the moſt ſhameful errors received; where the looſeneſs of manners may almoſt be parallel'd with Heatheniſm, where the moſt execrable crimes are committed? In a word, where the ignorance both of the people and clergy are general, excepting only ſome few underſtanding men who are ſenſible of theſe diſorders, but are reſtrain'd by fear from diſcovering their ſentiments. From thoſe places Corruption ſpreads to others, and it would not be difficult to ſhew by ſeveral inſtances that the cauſe of impiety, ignorance and vice, is to be found in thoſe places which ſhould be the fountains of piety and religion.

What I have now ſaid, is not to be applied to all Churches; for ſome there are where religion is not ſo corrupted, and where a purer Chriſtianity is profeſſed. But yet let us enquire in the ſecond place, whether there are any Chriſtian ſocieties, where nothing is wanting or to be deſired in the ſtate of the Church and religion, and where it would not be neceſſary to make ſome alterations and conſtitutions, in order to come nearer to perfection? This deſerves to be examined with care, and without prepoſſeſſion. We ought here to lay aſide the ſpirit of a party, and ingenuouſly to acknowledge defects where they are. For elſe if every one is wedded to the ſociety of which he is a member, nothing can ever be remedied. For ſuppoſing that there are defects, what remedy can be uſed, if we are all poſſeſſed with this prejudice, That all is perfect in our ſociety? Is not this the way to canonize abuſes, and to prevent the reſtoring of order?

And firſt, we ought not to wonder, if there ſhould ſtill be imperfections in the pureſt ſocieties. It would be a kind of miracle, if there were none remaining. God does not always think fit to finiſh his work all at once; unleſs he had made uſe of inſpired men, ſuch as the Prophets or the Apoſtles were. It was impoſſible ſo to attain perfection, and to provide for every thing at firſt dash, that nothing more ſhould be deſired. Beſides, circumſtances are ſo much altered that it ſeems neceſſary, to change ſeveral things that were left in the laſt age. It is further to be conſidered, that tho' Chriſtians did long for a good reformation, yet great difficulties were to be overcome to bring it about. Men's minds were not much enlighten'd, they were juſt creeping out of darkneſs, and a long cuſtom had almoſt obliterated the true ideas of religion. Almoſt all thoſe who were in civil or eccleſiaſtical authority, did obſtinately defend the abuſes which all good men thought it neceſſary to redreſs. Extream ſeverity was uſed towards thoſe who deſired this reformation of the Church. All this did terrify a great many well-meaning perſons, and was the cauſe, that in ſeveral places, thoſe who had courage enough to condemn the abuſes openly, were not able for want of means, to do all that the intereſt of religion required. They were fain in thoſe places to yield ſomething to the iniquity of the times, and to ſettle things as well as they could till a more favourable opportunity. Some Churches came nearer to perfection than others. But however, if we would paſs a right judgment upon the preſent ſtate of the Church and religion, we ought to examine the things in it fully, and without partiality. Upon this I ſhall offer here ſome general conſiderations, and refer to the following chapter ſome heads, which will require an exact and particular diſcuſſion. I will firſt reſume the four characters, which the Scripture

gives us of the Chriſtian Church and religion; which are, Truth, Holineſs, Union and Order.

1. All Chriſtian ſocieties boaſt that they profeſs the Truth; and that very thing is enough to ſhew that many of them are in error, ſince they do not agree among themſelves about the articles to be believed. I will not enlarge on this head, becauſe it would lead me into many particulars, and in ſome reſpect, into controverſy. I ſhall only ſay, that if we did judge of what is to be believed in religion, by that which ought to be the principle and rule of faith among Chriſtians, I mean, the holy Scripture, we would ſoon perceive on which ſide the truth lies. We might obſerve in that ſociety which vaunts it ſelf to be the pureſt of all and even which pretends to be infallible, and the only true Church excluſive of all other, abſurd tenets and monſtrous doctrines, equally repugnant to Scripture and reaſon, and we ſhould be convinced, that the doctrine of thoſe Churches which did ſeparate from that ſociety, is much more conſonant to the Goſpel.

2. We muſt have a very mean notion of Chriſtianity, if we can believe that Holineſs, which is the ſecond character of the Church, is to be found among Chriſtians at this time. The complaint of the laſt ages was, That religion wanted to be reformed in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline and manners. It was reformed in part by the rejecting of thoſe errors and abuſes, which were crept into doctrine, worſhip and diſcipline; but the reformation of manners is ſtill behind. The people have not as yet been reformed in this regard, except perhaps in thoſe times and places where they have been perſecuted. As for the reſt, they have ſcarce changed any thing beſides their belief and worſhip; this alone proves that the ſtate of the Church is yet imperfect. Holineſs is the ſcope of religion, it is the chief character of Chriſtianity; ſo that where holineſs and purity of manners is not, religion muſt be very defective.

III. Union, Peace and Charity, as was ſaid before, are one of the eſſential marks of the Diſciples and Church of Chriſt. But where is this character to be found? The Church at this day is rent into factions and parties. We cannot ſay, that there is but one Church; we muſt ſay, that there are many religions and Churches. Chriſtians divide not only upon lawful grounds, which make ſeparation neceſſary, but about things of ſmall conſequence. Upon the leaſt diverſity of opinions, they pronounce *anathema* againſt one another, form different ſects and communions. Even thoſe Churches which might have a common belief and intereſt are not united. Thoſe men who by their office ſhould be the miniſters of peace, are but too often the firebrands of diviſion. I deſire no other proof of this, but that zeal which moſt divines expreſs about the diſputes of religion, and that little diſpoſition which is found among them, to ſacrifice ſome opinions, or expreſſions, to the peace of the Church.

I do not condemn all diſputes without diſtinction, for ſome are neceſſary. The Apoſtles command the rulers of the Church, to eſtabliſh with care, pure doctrine, and to confute thoſe who endeavour to corrupt it. They did themſelves on many occaſions diſpute againſt falſe teachers. To deſert the truth when attacked, were to make but little account of

it: this would be a betraying the intereſt of piety, ſince piety is always founded upon truth. Diſputes become neceſſary, when eſſential truths are to be defended. Neither would I reduce all profitable or lawful diſputes, to thoſe only which concern fundamentals. There are errors, which tho' not mortal, yet are dangerous, and ſo it is needful to oppoſe them: and there are truths, which tho' not fundamental, are yet of great uſe in religion, and may ſerve to confirm the principles of Chriſtianity. It is fit that ſuch truths ſhould be diſcuſſed, provided this be done with moderation and honeſty.

I only blame uſeleſs diſputes, or thoſe, which tho' they may have their uſe, yet are accompanied with thoſe paſſions and diſorders, which blind zeal inſpires. Such controverſies which are but too common, are extreamly fatal to religion. We are not able to expreſs what miſchiefs they occaſion in the Church, and how prejudicial they are to the progreſs of Chriſtianity in general, and of piety in particular. It may ſeem at firſt, that becauſe the people do not take cognizance of theſe conteſts, they ſhould prove hurtful only to thoſe learned men by whom alone they are managed; but yet the whole Church feels the ill effects of them.

1. By reaſon of theſe diſputes, the people are deſtitute of edification, or at leaſt they do not receive all the edification which is neceſſary. Church-men being only full of theſe, ſtudy and meditate upon nothing elſe; in their ſermons they ſpeak only of theſe matters, which take them up, and which ſeem capital to them. They have neither leiſure nor inclination to mind things of another nature, and to ſet about the reforming the manners of Chriſtians; or they do it but faintly and careleſly. Whilſt a miniſter is very buſy in his ſtudy or pulpit, about confuting an adverſary whom he never ſaw, or an error which is unknown to his whole flock, his ſheep are loſt, his hearers remain poſſeſt with mortal errors concerning morality, and ingaged in the moſt vicious habits. This is the fruit of moſt diſputes, they occaſion the ruin, rather than the edification of the hearers.

2. Diſputes keep up among Chriſtians falſe zeal, hypocriſy and licentiouſneſs. The people learn by the example of their teachers, to place their zeal, not in oppoſing vice, but in underſtanding controverſy, in adhering to certain opinions, and in bearing a ſtrong hatred to thoſe who diſſent from them. They judge that what makes the ordinary employment of divines, what they inſiſt moſt upon, what kindles their zeal, and excites in them the moſt violent paſſions, muſt needs be the moſt important thing in religion.

3. Sometimes the people take part in the quarrels of their teachers, from whence proceed unavoidable animoſities and diviſions, which extinguiſh love, and the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and which create inſuperable obſtacles to the peace of the Church, and the re-union of Chriſtians. Of this we have but too many inſtances.

4. Laſtly, the little union which is in the Church, is one of the great cauſes of the ſmall progreſs of Chriſtianity. Chriſtians inſtead of making their religion appear lovely and venerable, to *Jews* and Infidels, expoſe it to their contempt. Inſtead of endeavouring to propagate the Chriſtian faith, and to deſtroy idolatry, they turn their own wea-

pons againſt themſelves; they mind nothing but the promoting the intereſt of their peculiar ſects, and they neglect that of Chriſtianity in general. On the other hand, unbelievers, ſeeing that Chriſtians are not agreed among themſelves, take occaſion from thence to queſtion every thing, and they judge that there can be nothing but uncertainty and obſcurity in a religion, where there is nothing but controverſy and different opinions.

The want of Union is then, a moſt conſiderable imperfection in the preſent ſtate of the Church. It were to be wiſhed, that ſome remedy might be applied to ſo great an evil, and that thoſe controverſies which produce and cheriſh it, might be turned out of doors. The way to compaſs this, would be to endeavour in good earneſt, the reforming of manners, and the reſtoring of order. This great and noble deſign will no ſooner be purſued, but men will be aſhamed of all theſe contentions, they will look upon them as trifling amuſements, and find no reliſh in thoſe diſputes, which to ſay the truth, do only employ ſuch perſons as are conceited with vain learning, and narrow-ſpirited men, who are not capable of larger and higher views.

IV. If we examine the preſent ſtate of the Church with relation to order, there we muſt ingenuouſly confeſs, that great defects are to be found. In matters of order and diſcipline, Chriſtians ought to regulate themſelves, firſt by the laws which Chriſt and his apoſtles have ſet them; and then by the examples of the primitive Church and of the pureſt antiquity. It being evident, that what has been practiſed in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, and does beſides agree with the rules and the ſpirit of the Goſpel, ſhould have a great regard paid to it, by all Chriſtians. Now it cannot be denied, but that moſt Churches have conſiderably departed from that ancient order.

To prove this by ſome inſtances, it is certain in fact, that the eccleſiaſtical order and government, which obtains in many places, is not ſuch as it ought to be. None can be ignorant of this, but thoſe who are altogether unacquainted with antiquity, or who being full of prejudices find what they pleaſe in Scripture, and Church-hiſtory. Can it be ſaid, that the elections of Biſhops or paſtors, are Canonical, as they are managed in many places, and that the practice and order, eſtabliſhed by the apoſtles and the primitive Chriſtians, are obſerved every where? It is certain likewiſe, that all Churches are not furniſhed with a ſufficient number of perſons to perform divine-ſervice, and to inſtruct and edify the people. When we look back upon the primitive Church, we find, that though it was poor and perſecuted, yet it had its biſhops, its prieſts, its catechiſts and its widows. At this time we ſee yet in ſeveral places, that one ſingle town maintains a great number of Church-men, who indeed, for the moſt part, are very inſignificant; but elſewhere it is quite otherwiſe, one ſingle man does often perform all the eccleſiaſtical functions; nay, ſometimes many churches have but one paſtor. This diſorder as well as many others, proceeds partly from the want of neceſſary means and funds, to ſupply the occaſions of all Churches. Here it might be proper to ſpeak of the paſtoral functions, and of the adminiſtration of diſcipline; but theſe two heads being important, I reſerve what I have to ſay about them, for the two next chapters.

We

We ought here not to omit the want of union and correſpondence among Churches. If they had more communion and intercourſe one with another, great advantages would follow from thence. Right meaſures might be taken for the edification of the people, and for the redreſſing of abuſes and ſcandals; that uniformity which is ſo neceſſary, both in worſhip, and in Church-government, and diſcipline, might be eſtabliſhed; and that would contribute much to the honour and ſafety of religion in general. The Church would appear then like a well-ordered ſociety, and like one body, of which all the parts ſhould maintain a relation to, and a ſtrict dependance upon one another. On the other hand, it is a great unhappineſs, when Churches have little or no intercourſe or communication one with another, ſo that every one orders its matters and cuſtoms, the form of its worſhip and government, within it ſelf.

Thus in many reſpects, it would be eaſy to ſhew, that things are not altogether regulated in the Church, as they ought to be, with relation to order. Men are not ſenſible of theſe defects, becauſe they are apt to judge of religious matters, by the practice of the preſent time, and by the cuſtoms of their reſpective countries; beſides, that antiquity is but little known. And yet theſe defects contribute more than is commonly imagined, to the decay of piety and zeal. The want of order in any ſociety, does moſt certainly bring confuſion and licentiouſneſs into it.

V. The worſhip of God being the end and the eſſence of religion, we cannot but inquire whether all things are well regulated with relation to that. To ſpeak here only of the public worſhip, it would be very neceſſary, that it ſhould be performed every where in ſuch a manner that the people might underſtand, the moſt eſſential parts of religion and divine worſhip, to be adoration, praiſe, and the invocation of God; and that the diſcharging of theſe duties is the end of public aſſemblies. I remark this particularly, becauſe in many places, devotion is placed only in the hearing of ſermons. Churches are properly nothing elſe but auditories. People fancy that ſermons are the chief thing they meet for, and that preaching is the principal function to be exerciſed by miniſters in the Church. The prayers and the pſalms, are looked upon only as preliminaries or circumſtances to a ſermon. This is a dangerous notion, becauſe on the one hand it makes Chriſtians neglect divine ſervice, and on the other it renders religion contemptible, when ſermons are not ſo edifying as they ſhould be, which happens but too often. And therefore it would not perhaps be amiſs, if as it is practiſed in ſeveral Churches, divine ſervice was diſtinguiſhed from ſermons by ſome circumſtances of times or perſons; ſo that it might be one thing to celebrate divine ſervice, and another, to hear ſermons.

Several reflections might be offered here concerning the principal things relating to public worſhip, ſuch as forms of prayers, liturgies, the manner of praiſing God, and ſacred hymns. It would be a queſtion worth the examining, whether we ought in Chriſtian Churches, to uſe only Pſalms and Canticles out of the Old Teſtament, among which tho' ſome are moſt edifying and full of excellent expreſſions of piety; yet there are many which relate altogether to ſome particular paſſages of thoſe times; or if they ſpeak of Chriſt, it is only in a prophetical ſtyle, very obſcure to the people. One would think that Chriſtian hymns, which ſhould

ſhould be ſung to the honour of God and Jeſus Chriſt, chiefly to celebrate the wonders of our redemption, might be extraordinary uſeful, to nouriſh piety and to ſtir up devotion, as well as more agreeable to that, which the apoſtles preſcribe, and which the primitive Chriſtians practiſed in their aſſemblies. Would it not likewiſe be neceſſary to agree about giving the holy Sacrament to ſick and dying perſons; and to reſtore the more frequent uſe of the euchariſt, according to the practice of the apoſtles and of the primitive Church? Faſting being enjoined by our Saviour, and eſtabliſhed by the example of the apoſtles, and by the univerſal practice of the firſt Chriſtians, and of all the Churches in the world for ſeveral ages; there is reaſon to wonder that in ſome places this duty ſhould be almoſt out of date. For as to ſolemn faſts, which are celebrated from time to time, and ſeldom enough; thoſe are not properly the faſts of which the Goſpel ſpeaks, and which were obſerved by the ancients: they are acts of public humiliation, deſigned for times of calamity, or of extraordinary devotion, and the uſe of theſe ought not to be too frequent, becauſe cuſtom is apt to leſſen their effect. But I mean thoſe faſts which are helps to devotion and holineſs, and means to mortify the body, and to diſpoſe men to humiliation and repentance.

Uniformity in divine worſhip would be another very neceſſary eſtabliſhment. It would ſhew the unity of faith, it would render religion venerable, and prevent thoſe diſorders and confuſions, which are inevitable, when rites and practices quite different, nay, ſometimes contrary to one another, are obſerved in ſeveral Churches.

Laſtly, Care ſhould be taken, that divine ſervice might be performed every where, in an orderly, grave and decent manner. The exterior of religion, has a greater influence than we imagine, upon the eſſence of it: beſides that we have an expreſs law, * which ſays, *That all things ſhould be done decently and in order*. Indeed, pageantry and pomp, the great number of ceremonies, and whatever ſavours of ſuperſtition, ought to be avoided, as well as every thing which is contrary to the eſſence of evangelical worſhip; and it were better to fall into an exceſs of ſimplicity, than to clog religion with too many ceremonies. But yet under pretence of ſimplicity, we are not to run into confuſion, and to neglect the externals of religion and divine ſervice. If we ſhould examine by this rule what is done in ſome churches, with relation, for inſtance, to the laws and forms of publick aſſemblies, to the celebration of divine worſhip and the ſacraments, and to the perſons who receive the communion, and who officiate; we might find there ſeveral things to be rectified. And it would be very uſeful to take this into conſideration, for the want of gravity and decency, and a dry and careleſs performing of publick worſhip, render religion deſpicable, and make the people, who commonly judge of things by their outſides, to entertain a mean notion of divine ſervice; which produces the contempt of religion, and by conſequence ill manners.

VI. This contempt of religion is another fault, which ought not to be paſſed over in ſilence. It has been always the general ſenſe of mankind, that religion is to be honoured and reſpected. The Heathen religions, as falſe as they were, did attract the veneration of the people; and the ſame may be ſeen at this day, among the ſeveral nations of infidels. Certainly

* 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

mainly then the Christian religion deserves all the veneration and respect, which men are capable of. But it must be confessed, that in many places, it is falling of late, into a very great outward meanness. Men are accustoming themselves, to look with indifference, with haughtiness and scorn upon every thing which has any relation to the Church or to religion. This appears especially in the contempt, which is expressed towards the Clergy. Tho' the Scripture represents their office, as a most excellent and honourable imployment; tho' it enjoyns Christians, to *honour, love and reverence those, who have the rule over them; yet the ecclesiastical order is generally but little honoured; and what is more surprising, it is most depressed and abased, in those Churches which otherwise profess a purer doctrine and worship, than other Christian societies. I do not speak of all Churches in general; but whoever sees what is practised in many places, would be apt to think, that it was a part of the reformation of the Church, to strip the Clergy of all ecclesiastical authority, and of every thing that might render them venerable to the people, and to set them upon a low and contemptible foot. Their character is become abject, if not odious, and it becomes so more and more every day. That which makes it more despicable, is the poverty which many of them are forced to live in.

It is not difficult to find out the grounds of this contempt. It may be justly charged upon the Clergy themselves, their character is become vile, because they expose it; but it does not follow that men have a right to despise them; all that is to be done, is to endeavour the reclaiming of them. If under pretence of persons being unworthy, or of some abuse in offices, it was lawful to despise the professions themselves, would not even magistracy be often the vilest of all imployments? May we not say also, That Church-men do not well maintain their character, because they are despised? An office which is slighted will never be well discharged; it is seldom that great worth is to be found in a post which is little honoured, or rather much despised.

The chief cause of this contempt was the manner in which things were ordered in the last Century. Persecution, poverty and the opposition of the higher powers, were at first great obstacles to the establishing of good order. Princes and great men did possess themselves of the revenues and authority of the Church. Nothing was left to Church-men, but the care of making sermons, and of administring the sacraments. They were turned into bare preachers; a character which for the most part is not very fit to create respect. I say nothing here of the discipline and government of the Church, because I am to speak of these more largely by and by.

This abasement of religion and of the ministry, is a visible cause of corruption. As soon as sacred things are disregarded, impiety must needs prevail; especially if the ministers of religion are despised, then religion can have no great force upon men's minds. The master cannot be honoured, when his servants are slighted. Men, who are without authority, cannot keep the people in their duty. Whatsoever comes from an abject person, who is neither beloved nor esteemed, can never be received with submission. The contempt of pastors, draws of necessity

* Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Thess. v. 13.

sity after it the contempt of divine service, of preaching, and of other sacred functions.

The poverty of Church-men, is not much less fatal to the Church than the immense and excessive riches which did formerly corrupt the Clergy. For besides, that in those times and places in which the Christian religion is predominant, and professed by persons of quality; poverty makes the ministers of religion contemptible to the people, and even to great men, it being certain that in those circumstances, it is necessary that ministers should live with some credit; besides this I say, that poverty disables them from exercising hospitality, from minding their function as they ought, and from discharging the duties of it with authority and zeal: it forces them to have recourse to several mean or unlawful methods to supply their necessities, and those of their families, and to do many things which do not comport with their imployment. From thence proceeds likewise the want of able ministers. A great many persons who might have the necessary talents, qualifications and means, to be very useful in the Church, take a disgust at that profession, by the fear of contempt or poverty. As long as things are in this state, religion will be despised, and corruption will still be in vogue.

It is not so easy to remove this cause of corruption as it is to detect it. The re-establishing of order, seems to be a thing extreamly difficult. To this end it would be requisite, that Princes and Churchmen should act in conjunction. But there are few Christian princes who lay this to heart, and divines have quite other things in their thoughts; their great business is to maintain what is established, and to dispute with those who find fault with it. On the other hand, knowledge or resolution is wanting, and there is not enough of honesty or greatness of soul, to confess the truth. Few writers have the courage to speak so impartially, as the famous author of the history of the reformation in *England* has done, in the preface to his second volume. It is thought by many persons, that all would be ruined if the least alteration was made. Some of those defects which have been mentioned in this chapter, are now become inviolable customs and laws. Every body fancies true and pure Christianity to be that which obtains in his country, or in the society he lives in; and it is not so much as put to the question, whether or not some things should be altered. As long as Christians are possessed with these prejudices, we must not expect to see Christianity restored to an entire purity.

But yet it is to be hoped from the Grace of God, and the force of truth, that Christians will open their eyes at last, and that divines will grow sensible of the necessity of minding these things. The main point here is to shake off all prejudice, and to consider things in their nature and original. Our Saviour has left us an excellent rule, when speaking of the abuses which had been so long received among the Jews, in reference to marriage, he tells us, * *That from the beginning it was not so.* This maxim is of great use, and a lover of truth and virtue, should always have it before his eyes. It were to be wished, that we should still appeal to it, and that instead of governing our selves by the custom of the present time, we should run up to the ancient constitution, and compare what is done at this day, with that which has been, and ought to be done.

* Matth. xix.

one. This would be the true way to reform abuses, and to draw near to perfection, and to bring things back into the natural and primitive channel.

CAUSE II.

The want of Discipline.

IT is not my design in this chapter to speak of Church discipline in general. I shall only insist upon that part of it, the end of which is to regulate the manners of Christians. And this is an important matter. The want of discipline is one of the greatest imperfections which have been observed in the present state of the Church, and one of the most evident and general causes of the corruption of Christians. But because some men have pretended, that discipline, such as I suppose it in this chapter, was a humane and arbitrary institution, the observation of which was not absolutely necessary, and might be dangerous; I think it proper to say something here, concerning the original and the necessity of the discipline of the Church.

I. It is certain in the first place, that all societies and bodies have a right to establish an order to regulate themselves by, and to provide for their security and preservation. When several men or people, unite to form a body, they have power to make laws and regulations, to which all the members of that body may be tyed; and to exclude those from their communion, who will not submit to them. But these laws ought not to clash with other laws already established, nor with just and acknowledged rights. I think, this power which is granted to the meanest of societies, cannot be denied to the Church; and this proves already that the Church had a right to appoint a discipline to which, all her members should be subject, provided, that discipline did not on the one hand prejudice public tranquillity, and the authority of the magistrates; nor any ways contradict on the other hand, the laws of the Gospel. Now as discipline is not liable to either of these inconveniences, but does rather perfectly agree with the welfare of civil society, and the spirit of the Christian religion, as will be proved hereafter; so the establishing of it, seems to be equally lawful and necessary.

II. But further, discipline is an order, which has God for its author. We find the institution of it in holy Scripture, and in the laws of Christ, and of his apostles; I shall recite the chief of these.

1. In St. *Matthew*'s Gospel, chap. xviii. 15, 16, 17. we read these words, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a publican.* For the right un-

derſtanding of theſe words, we muſt know that our Saviour does not enact here a new law, and that an order like that which is here preſcribed was already obſerved among the Jews. But here, as upon many occaſions, our Saviour did comply with the cuſtom and practice of that nation, becauſe he judged that thoſe cuſtoms were good, and fit for his views and purpoſes. The firſt Chriſtians did the ſame in matter of order and government, they did form the Chriſtian Church upon the model of the Jewiſh aſſemblies, and upon the method which was there obſerved.

This is the key of the place I have now quoted. Our Saviour approves the Jewiſh practice and enjoyns his diſciples to obſerve the ſame order amongſt them. It cannot be doubted but that this was his meaning. For he ſpeaks to his diſciples, and it appears by all the circumſtances of this paſſage, and by the ſequel of his diſcourſe, that he is giving here a law, which concerns the Chriſtian Church. It is true indeed, that he properly ſpeaks of private difference, but what he ſays ought to be applied to all thoſe diſorders, which may happen in the Church, and particularly to ſcandals. And ſurely it is evident, that if we may proceed in the methods here enjoyned, when the caſe is only concerning ſome differences between private men, we have much more right to do ſo with relation to public ſins, ſince they are caſes which concern the whole Church, and that directly, and which do yet more properly belong to her cogniſance, than the quarrels of private men. The meaning of Chriſt is then, that there muſt be an order in his Church for the removing of ſcandals. He ſuppoſes that the church has a right to interpoſe upon thoſe occaſions, and he commands that thoſe who ſhall refuſe to hear the Church, be looked upon as if they were her members no longer, and that communication with them ſhould be avoided: this is the import of theſe words, *Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and publican.*

2. The V. chapter of the firſt epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, ver. 2, 3, 4, decides this matter. St. *Paul* having been informed, that there was a man among the *Corinthians*, who lived in inceſt, he writes about it to that Church; and firſt he reproves them, *for not having cut off from their communion, the perſon who had committed ſo infamous an action.* In the next place he does himſelf excommunicate that man, and deliver him up to ſatan. I know that perhaps this power of delivering up to ſatan belonged only to the apoſtles, and it is likely, that this was one of thoſe extraordinary puniſhments, which they had a power to inflict upon prophane and rebellious perſons. But as for excommunication, it is the common and ordinary right of the Church. This right, or rather this duty of the Church, is clearly aſſerted by the cenſure which the Apoſtle addreſſes to the *Corinthians*, becauſe *they had not taken that inceſtuous perſon from among them*, and becauſe they had not obſerved the order he had given them before, not to ſuffer fornicators; * *I wrote unto you already not to company with fornicators.* He repeats this order in theſe words, which contain an expreſs and general law againſt all ſcandalous ſinners. † *I write it unto you again, not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch an one, no not to eat.* This is poſitive: and what the apoſtle adds, *Do not ye judge them that are within?* Is a confirmation that the

* Ver. 9. † Ver. 11.

e Church has a right to do so, with relation to her members. Lastly e concludes with these words, * *Therefore put away from among your selves at wicked person*; for thus this verse is to be rendred, as the drift of the hole chapter, of which this is the conclusion, shews it evidently. I dere the force of this proof may be considered. It is not one single passge which I here produce, it is a whole chapter, it is a thread of arguents, and of express and reiterated injunctions. St. *Paul* describes ose whom the Church ought not to suffer in her bosom, he appoints hat is to be done in reference to them; which is, that they ought to be ut off from the body of Christians, and that their company is to be voided. There cannot be a clear and express law, if this is not so.

3. There are some other places which have no ambiguity in them, *Thess.* iii. 6. *We command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, his preface is remarkable; here is a law in due form, which the apostle s going to deliver, he proposes it by way of command, and he interposes he authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, *We command you in the name of ur Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother that valketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.* This law is repeated, v. 14. *If any man obey not our word by this epistle, ote that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

4. The 1st epistle to *Timothy* affords us proofs unanswerable. The lesign of St. *Paul* in this epistle is to establish order and discipline in the Church. To this purpose he gives several precepts to *Timothy*; he instructs him exactly how pastors ought to proceed about information, censures, and the principal offices of Church-government. † *Rebuke not an lder but instruct him as a father, and the younger men as brethren; the elder vomen as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.* ‡ *Against an elder (or a priest) receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses: them hat sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.* I might dd other places out of this epistle and the following, and out of that to *Titus*‖. Here is then again, a whole thread of discourse, prescribing the order according to which the Church is to be governed. Here are particular rules; and St. *Paul* uses an adjuration to oblige *Timothy* to observe them. These laws do not concern *Timothy* in particular, but St. *Paul* speaks here of the episcopal function, and of the duty of the pastors of the Church in general. We need but read the epistles to *Timothy*, and the beginning of that which he writes to *Titus*, to be satisfied that he intends that this order should be settled in all the churches.

Either there is nothing plain in scripture, or it appears from all these places, that discipline is instituted of God; that the exercise of it is committed to pastors; that scandalous sinners are not to be tolerated in the Church; that private men ought to avoid their company; and that the governours of the Church are bound to proceed against them, by private and public censures, and even by excommunication. If the passages I have cited do not prove all this, we may wrangle about every thing,

* Ver. 13. † Chap. v.

‡ 1 Tim. v. 1, 2, 19, 20, 21. ‖ Tit. iii. 10.

thing, and all arguments from the sacred writings may be eluded. The institution of the sacraments is not more express or positive.

III. But though these places were not so positive and so clear as they are, yet we may be assured that this is their true meaning, because this is the sense in which the whole primitive Church understood them. The practice of the first ages, in conjunction with the laws of Christ and of his apostles amounts to a demonstration, which cannot be withstood; besides that we are to presume, that what has been practised from the foundation of the Church, and in the time of her purity, was settled by the apostles themselves, or by apostolical men, so that we ought as much as possible to conform our selves to it. Now we know that discipline was observed in the primitive Church, notwithstanding the unhappiness of the times, and the persecution. This is unquestionable matter of fact, and therefore I shall take it for granted; and only say in short, that then all those who embraced Christianity were engaged by a solemn vow to renounce the vices of the age, and to lead a holy life; that those who were baptized were not suffered to live disorderly; that vicious persons were debarred the holy mysteries; that those who fell into great sins were excommunicated, as well as those who were contumacious and incorrigible; that such were not restored to the peace of the Church, but after various degrees of penance, and a publick acknowledgment of their faults; and that as to those who relapsed, they were received only at the hour of death. Very clear monuments of this practice are still extant in the writings of the ancient doctors of the Church, as well as in the old canons and decrees of councils. This discipline must needs have been very severely observed, since St. *Ambrose* was not afraid to put it in practice against the emperor *Theodosius*.

I am not ignorant, that the primitive Church has varied about certain circumstances, that the penitents were treated sometimes with more and sometimes with less severity, and that the time of their penance was longer or shorter; but as to the main or the essence of discipline, it did always obtain in the primitive Church. And it was as little questioned then, whether discipline ought to be observed, as whether Christians should be baptized. This usage among the first Christians is at least a strong presumption in favour of discipline; but it being consonant besides to what we read in the New Testament, I do not see how there can remain any doubt about this matter.

IV. In the last place, the nature of discipline it self, proves the usefulness and necessity of it. All those who are not blinded with prejudice, must own, that discipline considered in it self, is altogether agreeable to the spirit of Christianity. 1. The honour of religion, and the promoting of Christ's kingdom, require order in the Church. Who does not see but that if the Church did tolerate scandalous persons and take them into her bosom, and make no difference between them and the faithful; she might justly be charged with all the disorders and scandals which are observed in the lives of bad Christians, and be looked upon by infidels, as a prophane society, where vice is permitted. But the exercise of discipline is an authentic disowning of vice, whereby the church declares publickly that she does not allow of it.

2. Discipline is a most efficacious means to procure the conversion of sinners.

nners. A man muſt be very much hardened, when the being removed om the communion of Chriſtians, does not reclaim him. But when ſcandalous perſon is ſuffered to live in the ſociety of the faithful, when e is admitted to the ſame privileges with other members of the hurch, this gives him an occaſion to harden himſelf in ſin, and to think hat he is as good a Chriſtian, and that he has as much right to ſalvation s others, which is a moſt dangerous, but withal a moſt common ima-ination.

3. Diſcipline is uſeful to the Church in general. Many who may therwiſe have ill inclinations, are reſtrained by example, or ſhame, or ear, or even by conſcience: good men are thereby doubly edified; ſince n the one hand this rigour confirms them in their duty, and that on the ther hand, it makes reparation for the ſcandal which other men's ſins ive them.

From all this, I conclude, that diſcipline is a ſacred, neceſſary and in-iolable order. It cannot be ſaid, that it is a humane, or arbitrary ſtabliſhment, which may be altered, or which was only to continue for time. An order which has its original in the expreſs laws of Chriſt nd his apoſtles, and which is appointed in Scripture as a general law; n order which has been obſerved in the primitive and apoſtolical Church; n order which is founded upon the very nature of the Church and reli-ion, and which perfectly agrees with the ſpirit of the goſpel; ſuch an rder certainly ought to be followed, as being of a neceſſary and indiſ-enſable obligation. I ſay it again, there is nothing more poſitive than his in the inſtitution of the ſacraments, diſcipline as well as the ſacra-ments, is founded upon divine inſtitution, and confirmed by the practice f the primitive Church; but in diſcipline there is one thing more than n the ſacraments; for whereas the ſacraments, conſidered in themſelves, nd without reſpect to the divine inſtitutions, are things indifferent and f no uſe; diſcipline in it ſelf is juſt and uſeful, agreeable to the princi-les of Chriſtianity as well as to plain reaſon and ſenſe.

I have perhaps been too large upon this ſubject, but it was to be prov-d in the firſt place that diſcipline is neceſſary and inſtituted by God, ince that is the ground I go upon in this whole chapter.

II. This ſacred order which had been ſettled in the beginning of Chriſ-ianity was altered in proceſs of time; and in this as in many other hings Chriſtians grew remiſs. This was done by degrees; for good aws are not commonly aboliſhed all at once, but through inſenſible hanges. We learn from eccleſiaſtical hiſtory that the ſlackening of iſcipline, is chiefly to be imputed to the taking away ſome publick pe-ances. Thoſe penances were converted into private confeſſions and enances. At firſt this alteration was only concerning ſome ſins, which ere not thought to deſerve the utmoſt rigor of diſcipline; for as to reat ſins, ſuch as murder and adultery, the ancient order was ſtill in orce. But at laſt, about the end of the IV. Century, publick penances ere aboliſhed, firſt in the eaſtern, and ſome time after, in the weſtern Churches. Inſtead of penances, private ſatisfactions were appointed, nd then men unhappily began to be more concerned about the exte ior f penance, than about what is ſpiritual in it, and fit to reclaim ſi ners. his was done at firſt by a kind of relaxation or indulgence; bu that

which at the beginning was no more than an exception to the law ſucceeded in the room of the law it ſelf; and from thence ſprang indul gences, ſatisfactions, penance, auricular confeſſion, and many othe practices, which are but corruptions of the ancient diſcipline. Th Biſhops on the other hand being diſtracted by temporal cares, after th converſion of the emperors to the Chriſtian religion, began to negle the eſſential parts of their function, and the conduct of their flock: They were for humouring great men, who thought it hard to ſubmit t the publick order. This is a ſhort account, how the purity of th Chriſtian religion was conſiderably adulterated in the point of diſci pline.

III. We are now to examine what the preſent ſtate of the Churc and religion is, with relation to diſcipline. All the abuſes which cam up in the room of the ancient diſcipline, do ſtill ſubſiſt in moſt places both in the Greek and in the Latin Church. The Canons and laws o the Church in the firſt Centuries have been abrogated by contrary law and Canons. This is acknowledged by all men of learning and ſin cerity.

Let us ſee then whether this diſcipline is to be found any where elſ There are many Churches in the laſt age, which did redreſs thoſe abuſe I now mention. But they ought to have gone further; as theſe abuſe had ſucceeded in the room of apoſtolical diſcipline, ſo that too ſhou have been reſtored, when theſe were taken away. But this was no done as it might have been wiſhed. The diſorder was removed, bu order was not re-eſtabliſhed; and it is not hard to apprehend how thi came to paſs.

It is no wonder that thoſe abuſes ſhould be taken away; they wer grown too intolerable; and they could not hold out againſt the learnin of an age more knowing than the former were. Things were gone far, that a turn and a revolution were neceſſary. It is very probable be ſides, that intereſt, pride, or ambition, did move great numbers of pe ſons, who after all had not much piety, to ſet themſelves againſt tho many and great diſorders, and to ſhake off a yoke under which th Chriſtian world then groaned. But the ſame principles hindred them t ſubmit to the yoke of Chriſt, and to bind themſelves to the obſervatio of evangelical diſcipline. We are to conſider further, that the rules o diſcipline and penance had been diſuſed for ſeveral hundred years, ſo tha it was not eaſy to bring the world to ſubmit to an order, of which th notion was loſt. Policy had perhaps a large ſhare likewiſe in this revo lution. Princes and great men were eaſily determined to pull dow the exceſſive and uſurped authority of the Clergy, but they did not a expreſs the ſame zeal to reſtore to the Church, her lawful authority. I fine, among divines themſelves, there were many who could not endur that diſcipline ſhould be named, and who diſputed and writ againſt thoſe who were for excluding ſcandalous perſons from the holy ſacrament, an for making uſe of excommunication and publick penances. In ſuc circumſtances the reſtoring of diſcipline was a hard taſk. It will no be improper to relate here concerning this matter, the opinions and th very words of thoſe who were then employed about the reformation o the Church.

They looked upon discipline as a capital point to restore religion to s purity. They wrote * *That discipline was the best, nay the ONLY IEAN to keep the people in obedience; that the Church would never stand on a firm and solid foundation, till discipline and excommunication were used purge it, to give a stop to licentiousness, to banish vice, and to mend manrs, and that whosoever did reject the lawful and moderate use of excommucation, shewed himself by that to be none of Christ's sheep.*

But we do likewise observe in their writings, that they had the ill forne of not being able to succeed in their design: they say openly, that ey met on all hands with insuperable obstacles. † *That there was a mpany of ministers, who preached a Gospel without discipline, and who even uestioned, whether the use of discipline was to be brought back into the Church: hat some introduced licentiousness instead of Christian liberty, and thought that reject the Pope was enough in order to be truly evangelical: That others obrving the daily decay of Christianity, wished that the authority of the ministry ight be restored, but that either they did not see the true way of bringing this bout, or that if they saw it they despaired of success: That those who endeaoured to revive discipline were called tyrants who would have usurped the berty of the Church: That the people had shaken off all restraint, and were ccustomed to licentiousness; as if by taking away the Pope's authority, the inistry had been destroyed, and the word of God and the sacraments had lost eir efficacy.* They have said, that the want of discipline did produce orruption. ‡ *That because there were neither censures, nor corrections, nor penances,*

* *Calvini epist. & responsa*, pag. 337. Disciplinam jure vocare possumus ptimum, atque adeò unicum retinendæ obedientiæ vinculum. *Et paulò ost:* Itaque ecclesias nostras tum demum ritè fultas arbitrabor, ubi isto rvo colligatæ fuerint. *Et pag.* 336: Cæterum non aliter consistet ecclesiæ columitas, quam si ad eam purgandam, frænandas libidines, tollenda flatia, corrigendos perversos mores, vigeat excommunicatio, cujus moderam usum quisquis recusat, præsertim admonitus, se ex Christi ovibus non se prodit.

† *Capito in Calv. epist.* p. 7. Peritiores rerum ecclesiasticarum, cernunt causa (ejectionis vestræ) fuisse totam cohortem ministrorum, evangelium scientium sine disciplinâ, imò ne scientium an disciplina sit in ecclesiam reeanda. Otiosam enim functionem quidam tueri malunt, quam fructuosam: idam licentiam pro Christi libertate induxerunt, quasi ab evangelio stent, i jugum pontificium abjecerint. Aliqui verò, id est, plerique omnes, ani advertentes rem Christi indies abire in pejus, optarent quidem restitutam auritatem ministrorum, sed aut veram ejus reparandæ rationem ignorant, aut m videntes desperant prorsus. *Et paulò post:* Auditis enim tyranni esse vostis in liberam ecclesiam voluistis novum pontificatum revocare, atque id gas contumeliarum, *&c. Et paulò post:* Nam frænum prorsus excussit multitudo, æ assueta est & educata propemodum ad licentiam, quasi authoritatem ponciorum frangendo, vim verbi, sacramentorum, & totius evangelii evacuamus, *&c.*

‡ Bucerus de animarum cura, p. 171. Et quis negare potest, cum omtum peccatorum, quam atrocia etiam illa sint, adeo nulla increpatio, castiio aut pœnitentia est in ecclesia, hinc fieri ut juventus & plebs eo levios reddantur ad omne malum. Pudor & dedecus abeunt, homines efferun, redduntur (ut Paulus conqueritur) omnino impœnitentes; dedunt se

penances, nor excommunications in the Church, even for the greateſt crimes: the people and youth did commit all manner of ſins: That no perſon was reſtrained by ſhame, and that men became proud and altogether impenitent: That if the more odious ſins were expiated by penance, and a reaſonable ſeverity, as St. Paul enjoyns, and as it was anciently practiſed, there would be leſs corruption and more zeal in the Church.

Theſe were the ſentiments of many doctors in the laſt age; they ſaw that the want of order and diſcipline, was going to bring libertiniſm into the Church. But yet their endeavours were not altogether uſeleſs. Some Churches drew conſiderably nearer to the apoſtolical inſtitution: and there are ſome where diſcipline is not yet quite aboliſhed: they ſtill make uſe of ſome part of thoſe means preſcribed by the Goſpel for the correction of manners: they do not admit all perſons indifferently to the ſacrament: they retain the uſe of publick penances, and even, in ſome places, of excommunication. But yet there are ſtill many things wanting in the order and government of thoſe Churches, as will appear by comparing their preſent practice with that of the primitive Church, and with the Canons of the ancient diſcipline. I do not pretend that in this matter the practice of the firſt Chriſtians ought to be copied in every thing, but certainly in many points we ought to conform to it.

If we examine in what manner diſcipline is adminiſtered now a-days, we may obſerve ſeveral defects in it which are very conſiderable. For inſtance, we ſhall find churches where excommunication is uſed about matters of no great importance; where that which is called excommunication, is rather a civil ſentence or puniſhment, than an eccleſiaſtical cenſure, and where not the paſtors of the Church, but civil judges, excommunicate. Another common fault is, that diſcipline is exerciſed only upon two or three ſorts of ſinners; fornicators and notorious blaſphemers are indeed ſeverely proceeded againſt, but a great many perſons are ſuffered in the Church, who have nothing of Chriſtianity in their deportment; ſuch as drunkards, idle people, and ſeveral other ſinners whom the divine laws ſubject as much to the rigour of diſcipline, as adulterers. It would be altogether neceſſary to uſe diſcipline againſt thoſe who enter into marriage only to conceal their ſhame, and yet in moſt Churches no ſatisfaction is demanded of ſuch people: this is a matter of very great moment. There is no ſufficient care taken, to be ſatisfied about the ſincerity of ſinners repentance, when they are to be reſtored to the peace of the Church. The apoſtolical precept about avoiding all familiar intercourſe with ſcandalous ſinners, is out of uſe. By all this we may ſee, that few Chriſtians can boaſt of a pure diſcipline. But ſuppoſing that true diſcipline might be found in ſome places, yet how

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libidini, omnique vanitati; denique vita iſta petulanti atque perdita ſatiari nullo modo poſſunt.

Idem, p. 189. Si craſſiora delicta ſeveriore pœnitentia compenſarentur, ut ſanctus docet Apoſtolus, utque in ſancto atque ſalutari uſu fuit in eccleſiis veteribus bene conſtitutis: major inde apud omnes Dei Filios peccatorum fuga & deteſtatio, majorque vitæ Chriſtianæ zelus exiſteret, quam, proh dolor! hodie apud nos deprehendimus. *Vide & Buceri epiſtolam ad Calvinum, in epiſtolis Calvini.* pag. 370 & 371.

many defects do creep into the beſt conſtituted Churches, either through the ſtubbornneſs of ſinners, the oppoſition of corrupt magiſtrates, or through the fault and careleſſneſs of paſtors! The beſt laws are good for nothing when they are not obſerved; ſo that whether thoſe, who ought to exerciſe diſcipline for the giving a ſtop to ſcandals, do it not, or whether they have not the power to do it, it is ſtill true that corruption proceeds from the want of diſcipline.

What muſt we ſay then of thoſe Churches, where diſcipline is wholly unknown? where neither Church nor paſtors have any authority to govern or inſpect; where miniſters dare not exclude any one from the ſacrament, but admit all perſons indifferently to the holy communion, which abuſe would have been thought an unheard-of profanation in the primitive Church; and where all publick penances are out of doors? I ſay nothing of excommunication; if any man ſhould propoſe the reſtoring of it, his deſign would be looked upon in many places as an unpardonable crime; and the ſtrangeſt thing of all, is, that this want of diſcipline, is to be found in Churches, which acknowledge the Scripture for the rule of religion; and that there are divines, who inſtead of promoting the re-eſtabliſhment of diſcipline, oppoſe it, and maintain that none are to be debarred from the ſacrament; who cannot endure the very name of excommunication; and who pretend that where the magiſtrate puniſhes vice, there is no need of any other diſcipline. Thoſe divines have not the greater number on their ſide; but their opinion prevails, becauſe it favours policy and licentiouſneſs.

We are to impute to this fatal remiſſneſs the looſeneſs and irregularity of the manners of Chriſtians. I need not inſiſt more upon this, for every one is ſenſible of it. Good order keeps men in duty, but where there is no order, vice muſt of neceſſity bear ſway. What ſhould reſtrain people? Excepting ſome general admonitions which are delivered in ſermons, every perſon is left to himſelf, and lives as he thinks fit. Private men are not bound to give an account of their conduct to any body. Thoſe who lead the moſt unchriſtian life, ſwearers, covetous, profane, lewd and intemperate perſons, all ſorts of people, live peaceably in the Church; they are reputed members of it, they are mingled among true Chriſtians, they enjoy with them the ſame ſpiritual priviledges, at leaſt in all outward appearance, and they are admitted to the ſame ſacraments. As long as things are in this ſtate, we muſt not hope to ſee any abatement of corruption.

But that nothing may be omitted which may contribute to the clearing of this matter, it is neceſſary to anſwer ſome objections, and that which is alleged to excuſe, or even to juſtify, the taking away of the ancient diſcipline.

1. Againſt the reſtoring of diſcipline, ſome ſay, (which was objected in the laſt age) *That it is ſufficient for the edification of the Church, that the Goſpel ſhould be preached in it; ſince that is the ordinary means which God has appointed to procure the converſion and the ſalvation of men.* The Goſpel no doubt, is ſufficient to teach us, all that is neceſſary to be known in religion, but it is not true, that God makes uſe only of the preaching of the Goſpel, for the ſalvation of men: for he uſes other means beſides, as for inſtance, the ſacraments; and thoſe means, among which diſci-

pline is to be reckoned, are prescribed by the Gospel it self; so that whosoever submits to the Gospel, must likewise submit to that order we speak of. But further, the Gospel barely preached and known is not sufficient to salvation; nothing but the practice of the Gospel can save a man; and it is to little purpose to preach it, if the manners of Christians are not regulated, and if discipline is not used to that end, as a mean appointed of God. As to preaching, it will be shewn in the next Chapter. That men ascribe more efficacy to it than it has, and that there is a mistake in the opinion which they commonly entertain of it.

2. Those who are for mystical devotion and piety will certainly say, *That discipline is not essential to religion, that it is a matter of external order, and that external things are useful only to carnal and imperfect Christians.* But I desire those who have such opinions, to speak more reverently of an order of which God is the author, and which the Apostles have so expressly recommended. It cannot be thought that the Apostles, who did abolish the Mosaical ceremonies, would at the same time have burdened the Church with needless laws, or that they would have interposed Christ's authority, for the observation of an order, which had not been necessary. They are desired to consider besides, That men have bodies as well as souls; that among a great multitude, there are many persons of a gross understanding, who cannot be restrained but by external laws; and that it is absurd to pretend, that men can be so spiritualized, as to need no longer outward aids to piety. But it is a gross error to look upon discipline, as an order purely external; for properly speaking it is an order altogether spiritual. Discipline does not touch either men's bodies or their estates, it uses only spiritual means, and it is efficacious no farther, than as it operates upon the heart and conscience.

3. But others will cast the objection I have now confuted into this form: they will say, *That in external things, among which discipline is to be ranked, Churches are at liberty to regulate themselves as they think good.* I grant that Churches have that liberty in indifferent things, which are not appointed by a divine authority, but this cannot be applied to the matter in hand. An establishment of divine institution cannot be reckoned among things indifferent. Do we look upon the sacraments as indifferent ceremonies, which we are not bound to observe, under pretence that they are but external rites and ordinances? Churches indeed have a liberty where there is no law, tho' still that liberty is to be wisely and discreetly used, for fear of confusion; but when God has settled an order, Churches are not at liberty to chuse another, to make new laws, and to set up a new form of government. Such a liberty would be mere unruliness, and a criminal and sacrilegious presumption. This would be the way to multiply sects and religions infinitely.

4. The same answer may serve to refute such, who to justify the practice of those Churches, which do not observe the form of discipline used in the primitive Church, make a distinction between discipline and the manner of exercising it. They own *That discipline is necessary, and that there ought to be order in the Church; but they think that the way of exercising discipline may vary, according to time, place, and other circumstances.* This distinction may be received, when the case is only about some indifferent circumstances; but it is alleged without reason, when

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he question is concerning the substance or the essence of the thing it self. The disorder we complain of, is, That what is essential in discipline has been taken away, to substitute in lieu of it, another order, and to set up a new discipline of which the Apostles did not speak a word. Now that which is most essential in discipline, and which is not observed in most Churches, is this, That scandalous sinners are not to be suffered in the Church; and yet they are suffered: that they are to be warned and reproved in private, and even in publick; this is seldom done, and in some places it is never done: that Christians ought to separate themselves from those who live disorderly; and this is not observed: that upon certain occasions, they are to be cut off from the body of the faithful; but pastors dare not so much as mention this: that the administration of discipline belongs to pastors; that they ought to preside, proceed and judge in all emergent cases; the Scripture gives them that right, and ascribes to them those offices; but they have been divested of them, new political bodies have been erected, in which there is but one Church-man, or two for form's sake, who often have neither vote nor authority in them. It is of divine right that sinners should give real proofs of their repentance, as for instance, by making restitution, by reconciliations, by acknowledging their fault; but this is not now required of them; nay, in some Churches it is not so much as enquired into. It is against all the laws of discipline, That none should be excluded from the holy communion, and yet in most places this is not regarded. Lastly, it is in apostolical order and practice, That sinners should be received to the peace of the Church, but 'tis after they have fitted themselves for it, by a sincere, and if the case requires, by a publick repentance; but now a-days those ancient rules of discipline are abolished.

After all this, can it be said that no alteration has happened in the essence of discipline, but only in the manner of it? Censures, suspensions, excommunication and the authority of pastors are taken away; the government appointed by the Scripture is overturned, another and quite different form is brought into the room of it; and yet people will say, that the question is not about the thing it self, but the manner! It is not sufficient to have any kind of order; the order which God has prescribed, and no other, ought to be observed. Some circumstances may be varied according to the necessities of Churches, but the substance of the thing it self is unalterable.

5. Many are of opinion, That the authority of the magistrate supplies the want of discipline, and that this way is by much preferable to the other. I confess, that the punishments inflicted by the magistrate upon scandalous livers are of great use; that magistrates who use their authority to suppress vice are very commendable, and that discipline is of much greater force, when it is supported by the authority of civil powers. But still the divine institution is to be preserved entire; it does neither belong to the magistrate, nor to any power to alter that which God has commanded, and to deprive the Church of her right. After all, the discipline of the magistrate is not the discipline of the Church; these are two distinct things and of a quite different nature. The magistrate uses external and corporal punishments; fines, imprisonments, banishments, force, *&c.* These methods are certainly useful, they may ter-

rily sinners, and in some respects keep them in awe and duty: but besides this, it is necessary to work upon the heart, and to bind the conscience by those methods which discipline uses, or else it is to be feared, that we shall only make hypocrites, and that men will abstain from evil more out of the fear of punishment, and upon temporal considerations, than from motives of conscience.

Nay there are people, who if they had nothing to fear but a fine, or some days imprisonment, would gladly purchase at that rate the liberty of sinning, and fancy that, provided satisfaction be made to the magistrate, there is no more to be done for the clearing of their conscience. Besides, what a disorderly thing is it, that an offender who is prosecuted, fined, and imprisoned by the magistrate, should still be treated like a member of the Church, and admitted to the holy sacrament? The magistrate's authority is therefore a very efficacious mean to promote the glory of God, when it is joined with ecclesiastical discipline; but to think that civil laws are sufficient to regulate manners and to reclaim sinners, is a conceit almost as unreasonable, as it would be ridiculous, to proceed against robbers, or the other disturbers of the publick peace, only by spiritual punishments. Let no man then confound those things which God has set asunder.

6. It is farther said, *That these rules of discipline were only for a time, and that the times are altered.* But how can it be proved, that the laws of discipline were only made for a time? Is there any ground for this, either in the Scripture, or in the nature of those laws? Are the laws of discipline like those of *Moses*, which do no longer bind us? Did the apostles make this distinction? Did St. *Paul* say upon this subject, as he did in another case *, *I only give my judgement*; *I have no commandment of the Lord?* Does he not speak positively of the order according to which the Church is to be governed? Does he not command in the name of Jesus Christ? Does he not establish general laws and maxims for all the Churches? The apostles indeed appointed some rules, the observation of which is not necessary at this day, because those regulations were visibly founded upon particular reasons, which do no longer subsist, and therefore they are not proposed as general laws. But the reasons upon which discipline is founded, and which are taken from order and edification, from the honour of the Church, from the conversion of sinners, and from the nature of the Christian religion, those reasons do still subsist; and consequently the rules of discipline are sacred and inviolable, especially being delivered by way of command, and repeated in so many places. The Christian Church is to be diffused all the world over, sometimes she is persecuted, and sometimes she enjoys a calm; but whatever state she may be in, her nature does not alter. As there is but one God, one Church, one faith, one baptism; so there is to be but one order, at least as to essential things, and that order ought to be conformable to the laws of the apostles. Or else there will be, as in fact we see there are, as many different customs and disciplines, as there are kingdoms, states, provinces, nay towns and churches.

7. It is commonly objected, *That the zeal of the primitive Christians is extinct, that men are now very corrupt, and that it would be impossible to bring them*

* 1 Cor. vii.

them to a ſubmiſſion to the diſcipline of the Church. But that very thing, that men are corrupt, proves the neceſſity of diſcipline. Order is never more neceſſary than when all is in confuſion. * St. *Paul* ſays, *That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient.* Diſcipline ſeems more neceſſary now, than it was in the firſt centuries; becauſe then perſecution kept corruption out of the Church. But when the Church is in peace, vices and ſcandals do infallibly multiply; and then it is, that good diſcipline is of excellent uſe.

But then it is ſaid, *That it would be impoſſible to reſtore it, conſidering the diſpoſition men are now in.* I confeſs this deſign would meet with oppoſition. Thoſe who go about to reſtore order and ſuppreſs licentiouſneſs, muſt ſtill encounter difficulties; but yet this might be compaſſed, if princes and magiſtrates did not oppoſe it. If all the paſtors did ſet about it, with a zeal accompanied with prudence and gentleneſs; if they did carefully inſtruct the people concerning the neceſſity of diſcipline; and if they did apply themſelves to the civil powers with equal vigour and reſpect; they would carry the point at laſt. After all, the people are not in a worſe diſpoſition than the Heathens were in, before the apoſtles preached the Goſpel to them; and there are Chriſtian princes and magiſtrates who have piety and zeal. If then the Heathens of old could be brought under the diſcipline of Chriſt, in the ſight of Heathen magiſtrates, ſhould we deſpair of ſubjecting Chriſtians to it? The inſtance of thoſe Churches where diſcipline is obſerved, at leaſt in part, and where excommunication and publick penances are in uſe, ſhews that there is no impoſſibility to ſucceed in this deſign. If the thing was impoſſible, God would never have commanded it.

8. In the laſt place, there is an objection which is commonly urged with great force, and which ſeems to have much weight in it. It is ſaid, *That we have reaſon to fear that diſcipline would bring tyranny into the Church, and that thoſe who govern it, would then aſſume too much authority.* Let us ſee whether this fear be well grounded.

And firſt, if we ſuppoſe this principle, That diſcipline is inſtituted of God, and that the apoſtles did commit it to the Church and her governours, which I think has been fully demonſtrated, will it not be a kind of blaſphemy, to ſay, That diſcipline is not to be ſuffered, leſt paſtors ſhould become tyrants? Would not this reflect upon our Saviour and his apoſtles, as if they had eſtabliſhed a dangerous order, which is apt to introduce tyranny? At this rate the apoſtles and the primitive Chriſtians did incroach upon the liberty of the people, and the authority of princes. Every Chriſtian will abhor this conſequence, and yet it reſults naturally from the opinion of thoſe who reject diſcipline for fear of tyranny. Beſides, ſuppoſing that Chriſt has inſtituted the order we ſpeak of, can we thus argue againſt it, without ſhaking off his yoke? But men do not conſider this. They fancy that every thing that is granted to the Church is granted to her governours, whereas they ſhould remember that it is paid or yielded to Chriſt, whoſe right it is, and who cannot be deſpoiled of it without ſacrilege. Here we might retort the charge upon thoſe who bring it. They talk of tyranny, and is it not an intolerable piece of tyranny,

* 1 Tim. i. 9.

tyranny, to oppoſe a divine law, and to debar the Church and her governours of the enjoyment of thoſe rights which God had given them?

But to come cloſer to the objection, nothing can be feared, but one of theſe two inconveniences; either an empire over conſciences, or ſome prejudice to the publick tranquillity, and to the authority of civil powers.

As to the firſt of theſe two inconveniences, there is no great reaſon to fear it; ſince the apoſtles, who ſo expreſsly recommend diſcipline to paſtors, forbid them at the ſame time to aſſume a dominion over conſciences. Provided diſcipline is uſed only in thoſe caſes, and in that manner which the Scripture appoints, and as it was practiſed by the firſt Chriſtians *, nothing like this is to be feared from it. The diſcipline we ſpeak of does not meddle with points of faith, and ſo fear in this reſpect is groundleſs. As to thoſe caſes which concern manners, injuſtice can hardly be committed about them. The Church does not judge of ſecret and unknown facts. She only proceeds againſt notoriouſly ſcandalous and impenitent ſinners, and ſhe receives them, as ſoon as they expreſs their repentance. And is there any thing of tyranny or danger in this? It is proper to obſerve here, eſpecially with reference to excommunication, which is thought the ſevereſt part of diſcipline, That when the Church proceeds to that extremity, ſhe does not, properly ſpeaking, act by way of authority, as if ſhe had an abſolute power to puniſh a ſinner, and to cut him off from her body: but that ſinner has already by his life cut himſelf off from the communion of Chriſt, he is no longer a member of the Church; ſo that the Church only declares that which is done and determined already, tho' ſhe ſhould not declare it.

Neither is there any cauſe to fear that the publick peace ſhould be diſturbed by the exerciſe of diſcipline. On the contrary, ſociety will be the better regulated for it. For diſcipline does not touch civil matters. Excommunication itſelf does not hinder a man from being ſtill a member of the common-wealth, nor that all the duties of juſtice and humanity ſhould be diſcharged towards him.

As for the authority of civil powers, it is no ways injured by this, as evidently appears from the firſt Chriſtians exerciſing diſcipline openly in the ſight of the Heathen magiſtrates, without any oppoſition from them. Chriſt did not come into the world to erect a temporal kingdom, nor to draw men off from their ſubmiſſion to the authority of kings and magiſtrates. It is the principle of a true Chriſtian, † *To render unto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's, and to God the things which are God's.* This principle will not deceive a man, and as long as we adhere to it, all things will be in order. Religion is ſo far from having any juſt umbrage to princes, that on the contrary it ſtrengthens their authority. Submiſſion to the higher powers is recommended by the apoſtles in the moſt earneſt manner. The Chriſtians of the firſt ages, who were very ſtrict obſervers of diſcipline, diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their loyalty to princes. Nay it is obſervable, that their diſcipline which was ſo ſevere againſt ſinners, was as ſtrict againſt thoſe who were wanting in the fidelity and reſpect due to ſuperiours; witneſs that Canon, ‡ which enjoyns the depoſition

* 1 Pet. v. 2. 2 Cor. i. 24.
† Mat. xxii. 21. ‡ Can. Apoſt. 84.

poſition of thoſe biſhops and clergy-men, who ſhould offer an affront to the prince or his officers.

Whoſoever will take the pains to weigh this matter, will acknowledge that diſcipline is a diſtinct thing from the civil power. Each of theſe has its bounds and limits. The Church does not touch the body nor civil matters, and it is not the magiſtrate's buſineſs, to regulate things relating to conſcience and ſalvation. Indeed if magiſtrates imagine, that they have a right to govern the Church as they think fit, and that they hold the ſame rank in it, which they hold in the civil ſociety, ſo that the miniſters of religion are but their officers; diſcipline may ſeem to them to leſſen their authority: but let thoſe who entertain ſuch thoughts, ſee how they can reconcile them with the Goſpel, and with the nature of the Chriſtian religion.

Notwithſtanding all this, it will be ſaid that Church-men have been known to uſurp a dominion over conſciences and over kings. It is true, Church-men have abuſed their authority, but becauſe a thing has been abuſed, is it therefore to be aboliſhed? Wiſe men will rather ſay, that things ought to be reſtored to their natural ſtate and to their lawful uſe. Elſe the whole authority of kings and magiſtrates might be pulled down, and we might argue thus. Monarchical government is liable to great inconveniences, kings have been tyrants and uſurpers, therefore there muſt be no more kings. Magiſtrates and judges have been unjuſt, covetous, cruel, and therefore no magiſtrates are to be endured. Would not this argument be extravagant and impious? And yet the like argument is uſed againſt diſcipline. In Church as well as in ſtate government, there will be always ſome inconveniency to be feared: this evil is almoſt unavoidable, there being no form of government which the malice of men may not abuſe: but thoſe abuſes are without compariſon a leſs evil than anarchy, which is the moſt dangerous ſtate of all.

But let us clear the matter of fact, upon which the objection I am now confuting, is founded: it is ſuppoſed, that diſcipline did introduce tyranny; but on the contrary, it was upon the ruins of diſcipline, that tyranny was erected. This is known to all thoſe, who have any knowledge of antiquity. When did Biſhops and Clergy-men uſurp that exceſſive authority, over men's eſtates, perſons and conſciences? It was when the obſervation of the ancient diſcipline was ſlackened, when diſcipline began to wear out of uſe, when ſinners, and eſpecially great men, were exempted for money; when that which ſhould have been tranſacted by the whole Church, was referred only to the Clergy, and when publick confeſſion was changed into a private one. It was by theſe means, and not by the due exerciſe of diſcipline, that Church-men made themſelves maſters of all.

What we ought to do then is this, firſt, to enquire what is of divine inſtitution in diſcipline, and to reſtore that; in the next place to conſider what the ſalvation of ſinners and the honour of the Church require, and what was good and edifying in the practice of the primitive Church, in order to conform to it; and laſtly, to provide by good laws, that no man may exceed the bounds of his calling; particularly, that in reſtoring to the Clergy their lawful authority, all juſt meaſures may be taken, to prevent their abuſing it. If Chriſtian princes are bound to preſerve the

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rights of the Church, they ought likewise to take care that nothing be done against their own authority, and to punish those who oppose it, or who disturb the civil society, whether ecclesiasticks or lay-men. This we are to treat of in another place.

Besides, when we speak for the re-establishment of discipline, we mean that pastors should be subjected to it as well as their flocks, and that if there is an order in the Church to regulate the manners of Christians, there should be one also to regulate the Clergy, and to lay strict obligations on them to discharge their duty in all its parts; and that according to the ancient practice, discipline ought to be more severe against the ecclesiasticks who fail in their office, than against the people. But as we have complained in this chapter of the want of discipline, with relation to the Church in general, so we are going to shew in the next, that this want is neither less observable, nor less fatal, in those things which concern the governours of the Church.

I conclude with saying, that in order to remedy the corruption of manners among Christians, it is absolutely necessary to restore the use of discipline. This is what has been and is still heartily wished for, by many persons of eminent learning and piety, and it is that which I desire all those who have a zeal for the glory of God, to take into their serious considerations.

CAUSE III.

The Defects of the Clergy.

IN searching after the causes of the decay of piety, we cannot but enquire, Whether corruption does not proceed from the pastors and governours of the Church? Pastors are appointed to oppose the progress of vice, and to be publick fountains of instruction, edification and good example; so that in truth their ministry is of most excellent use, when duly exercised. But when vice reigns, when scandals multiply; that general corruption is, if not a certain proof, at least a strong presumption, that there is some fault in pastors.

If we would be satisfied about this matter, we need but reflect upon the nature of their office, and upon their way of discharging it. This is what I design to enquire into in this chapter: in order to which, I shall consider, 1. What functions and duties are annexed to the office of pastors. And, 2. What qualifications are requisite in them to discharge it worthily.

I. There are two principal functions incumbent on pastors: Instruction, and the government of the Church.

1. It would be needless to prove that the office of pastors obliges them to instruct the people and to preach the Gospel, for this is beyond all question. It will be fitter to observe, that the fruit of publick instructions delivered in sermons, depends upon two things; the matters treated of, and

and the way of propoſing them; ſo that the faults committed in ſermons are either in the things themſelves, or in the manner of handling them.

1. The matters handled in ſermons, are either of doctrine or morality. What has been ſaid in the firſt chapter of this treatiſe, may ſerve to diſcover to us the defects in preaching, with relation to theſe two heads. Thoſe who preach the Goſpel do not ſufficiently inſtruct the people, neither in the fundamental doctrines, nor in the duties of religion: and as catechiſing is properly deſigned for the explication of theſe truths and duties; I think ignorance and corruption chiefly proceed from this, That in moſt Churches, things are not well ordered, with reference to catechiſing. They are neither frequent enough, nor ſo proper for inſtruction as they ſhould be. Beſides, catechiſing is almoſt every where neglected if not deſpiſed. The common notion is, that catechiſms are only for children and for the meaner ſort of people. The function of a catechiſt, which was anciently ſo conſiderable in the Church, is looked upon now as a function of no great importance, and it is uſually committed to perſons of the leaſt knowledge and experience.

Theſe faults might eaſily be remedied. One of the moſt uſeful eſtabliſhments in Churches, would be to increaſe the number of catechiſms, and to appoint them inſtead of the ſermon. But to render them more uſeful and more frequented, it would be neceſſary to eſtabliſh two ſorts of them. In thoſe of the firſt ſort, the elements of religion ſhould be explained in an eaſy and familiar manner, for the benefit of children and of the leſs knowing part of Chriſtians. The other ſhould be for thoſe who have attained a higher degree of knowledge, and in theſe, matters that had been propoſed but generally before, ſhould be more fully and exactly handled. But if it be thought that an eſtabliſhment of this nature, and that the multiplying of catechiſms, might meet with difficulty and obſtructions, it would be neceſſary at leaſt, for the inſtruction of great numbers of perſons, who never aſſiſt at thoſe exerciſes, that miniſters ſhould be obliged to preach upon the ſame ſubjects, which are commonly treated in catechiſms.

As for ſermons, the church would reap more benefit from them, if preachers did always ſhew true judgment in the choice of the matters they handle. We muſt not think that all ſorts of ſubjects are inſtructive alike, and that in order to preach the Goſpel, it is enough to ſpeak of God in a ſermon, and to take a text out of Scripture. Every ſubject ought to be propoſed and preſſed according to its importance. To inſiſt upon matters of leſſer moment, whilſt thoſe which it moſt concerns Chriſtians to be informed about are neglected, is to ſwerve from the true intendment of preaching. But becauſe all preachers have not the capacity to make this choice, it would be fitting, that part of the matter of their diſcourſes ſhould be appointed and preſcribed to them by a law. For when they are tyed to no rule, when they are at liberty to preach upon any ſubject which they think fit to chuſe, it happens that many inſtead of handling the moſt important things in religion, and of conſulting the preſent ſtate and neceſſities of their flocks, apply themſelves to various ſubjects which are of no great edification.

Preachers for the moſt part, conſult only their own inclination in the choice of their matter; and when they pitch upon a ſubject, it is rather becauſe

becauſe it pleaſes them, and becauſe they apprehend a facility in treating it, than out of regard to the neceſſities of their congregations. Thoſe who are fond of myſteries and allegories, apply their time and ſtudies to the expounding of the prophecies, and to the unfolding of the types of the old Teſtament. Thoſe who are given to diſputing, fill their ſermons with nothing elſe but controverſy. And the ſame may be ſaid of ſpeculative divines, who are converſant in the fathers and hiſtory, they entertain the people with thoſe things which are the ordinary ſubject of their meditations and ſtudies. I do not mean, that ſuch things ought never to be ſpoken of; they may ſometimes be touched upon, provided, this be done judiciouſly: but they have a ſorry notion of religion and preaching, who make thoſe matters their main buſineſs, and fancy they have entirely fulfilled all the parts of the Goſpel miniſtry, when they have preached upon types, or controverſy.

What I have now ſaid, may be applied to the choice of texts. * *All Scripture* indeed, as St. *Paul* ſays, *is profitable for inſtruction*; that divine book contains nothing but what is uſeful; but yet the various uſefulneſs of the ſeveral parts of Scripture, is to be diſtinguiſhed, and it muſt be owned that ſome places are more uſeful and inſtructive than others. Some difference is to be made between thoſe books and chapters, which explain the doctrine of redemption, the deſign of Chriſt's coming into the world, or the duties of a Chriſtian life; and thoſe which ſerve only to acquaint us with the order of times, and to confirm the certainty of hiſtory. Theſe laſt have their uſe, ſince the truth of hiſtory is one of the main proofs of the truth of religion; but thoſe places are more uſeful which treat of what we are to believe or to do in order to ſalvation. It is of another ſort of importance, to explain the Goſpel, than to preach upon the book of *Joſhua* or *Ruth*, or upon ſome places of the prophets. I am not ignorant that ſome have thought, that the Scripture is equally rich every where; that all doctrines may be drawn from all texts; that thoſe chapters and verſes which ſeem the moſt barren, and where there appears nothing extraordinary, contain myſteries and treaſures which might exhauſt even the meditations of angels; but this conceit is ſo abſurd and repugnant to ſenſe, that I do not think it worth my while to confute it.

Morals being ſo eſſential a part of religion, ſhould be very particularly inſiſted upon by preachers, and yet few do it; ſo that morality, of all things is that which is the moſt ſuperficially handled in the greateſt part of ſermons. This fault in preachers proceeds from ſeveral cauſes. Some have a prejudice againſt morality, and think it ought not to be inſiſted on. Others who are conceited with vain learning, imagine that to preach morals, argues but an ordinary meaſure of parts, and little ſkill in divinity, and that it becomes them better to ſoar after high ſpeculations, and to dive into the myſteries of faith and of the moſt ſublime theology. This cuſtom of inſiſting more upon doctrine than morals, proceeds alſo from another cauſe, which is, that in this laſt age divines were fain to be continually explaining and diſputing; and ſo the ſame method has been followed ever ſince.

I am apt to think beſides, that many divines neglect morality, becauſe the

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

the treating of it is more difficult, than the explaining doctrinal matters. Let thoſe ſupercilious and ſpeculative divines ſay what they will, the right handling of morality is the hardeſt thing in preaching. It is eaſie to explain a text, or a point of doctrine; and a man muſt be very meanly gifted, if with the help of a commentary or a common-place, he is not able to do the feat, and to furniſh out his hour. But to preach morals is quite another thing. I confeſs that there is a way of preaching morality which requires no great pains. If men content themſelves with delivering moral ſayings concerning vice and virtue, this may be done without much labour. But when a preacher purſues true morality, when he is to maſter the hearts of men, to reform the manners of a whole congregation, to encounter the inclinations of his hearers, and to make them renounce their paſſions and prejudices; then it is that he meets with many and great difficulties: this is an inexhauſtible ſpring of labour and meditation, and a taſk which few preachers care to take upon them.

In religion, doctrine ſhould never be ſeparated from morality, nor one of theſe preferred before the other. But yet it is neceſſary to inſiſt more upon morality than upon doctrine, not only becauſe the deſign of our whole religion is to make us good men, but alſo becauſe morality cannot effectually be taught without being much dwelt upon. It is only by enlarging on matters, and entering into many particulars, that the two ends of morality are to be attained, which are inſtructing men in their duty, and perſuading them to the practice of it.

Morality is of a vaſt extent, as may appear by conſidering how many duties are compriſed under theſe three heads of Chriſtian morals, piety, juſtice, and temperance. Beſides theſe duties which are common to all men, there are ſome particular ones relating to the different conditions, callings, ages, and ſtates which men are in. And how many things are there to be conſidered upon all theſe heads? This is not all, for theſe duties vary infinitely, by reaſon of the diverſity of circumſtances. There are almoſt as many different diſpoſitions as there are perſons among a great multitude of men who are addicted to the ſame vice; there are hardly two who are vicious in the ſame degree and manner. It is therefore requiſite that preachers ſhould deſcend into particulars, and that they ſhould to characterize duties, virtues and vices, that every one may know himſelf in the deſcription.

And yet this relates only to bare inſtruction. Now if in the next place we intend to engage men to the practice of theſe duties, there new difficulties will ariſe, and no good ſucceſs can be expected but from aſſiduous care and conſtant labour. There are in man's heart, ſo many different diſpoſitions and motions, ſo many illuſions and prejudices, ſo many windings and artifices, that a very particular application is required for us to inſinuate our ſelves into it. When the truths and doctrines of religion are to be taught, things need not be ſo minutely handled, and there is no occaſion to uſe ſuch mighty endeavours; nay, the being very particular may be a fault. He that would inſtruct, ſo he is clear, ſhould rather be ſhort than prolix. The hearers do eaſily apprehend the truths which are propoſed to them, and the moſt corrupt men are able to diſcern truth from error; a libertine will find who is in the right or in the wrong, in a diſpute. But it is not ſo eaſie a thing to touch the heart, or

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to conquer inveterate habits. What *Tully* ſays in his dialogue of the orator, deſerves to be inſerted here, it is this, * *Paſſions are not to be excited in a moment, as a proof does preſently perſwade ſo ſoon as it is propoſed. A proof is confirmed by reaſons, and reaſons clearly ſet out, make an impreſſion immediately; but when we intend to raiſe the paſſions, the ſucceſs does not ſo much depend upon the conviction, as upon the perturbation of the mind. Oratory cannot have its effects then, without prolixity, variety, copiouſneſs and vehemence of diſcourſe. Thoſe therefore who ſpeak briefly and calmly, are fit to inſtruct, but not to move.*

From theſe reflections it appears, that the method of thoſe preachers, who are large upon the explication of doctrines, and ſuccinct upon morals, is directly contrary to the true way of preaching, and that thoſe do very ill underſtand what morality is, who either deſpiſe it, or look upon it as the eaſieſt thing in preaching.

We may likewiſe apprehend from what has been ſaid, what are the moſt ordinary faults of preachers when they treat of morals. I ſhall obſerve three of them. Their morality is *too general*, it is *defective*, and it is ſometimes *falſe*.

1. Many preachers are *too general* in handling morality. This is the head which is the moſt ſlightly touched upon. They ſpend the greater part of their ſermons in explaining the ſenſe of a text, they ſift all the words, and examine all the circumſtances of it with the utmoſt nicety. In a word, they drain the ſubject. But when they come to the application, they content themſelves with two or three general uſes; they addreſs to their auditory ſome looſe exhortations to a good life; even when they are to ſpeak upon a moral ſubject, they confine themſelves for the moſt part to general conſiderations: nothing is particularized, or treated with the neceſſary exactneſs. Now generalities are of no great uſe in matters of morality. To ſay in general terms, that men ought to be good, and to declaim againſt ſenſuality, or covetouſneſs, is that which will convince no man. It is not bawling or ſending ſinners to hell, that is likely to win upon them. It ſhould be diſtinctly ſhewn, what it is to be a good man; virtues and vices ſhould be characterized, and their various kinds and degrees obſerved; particular rules ought to be given to the hearers, they ought to be furniſhed with neceſſary motives and directions; we are to confute their miſtakes, and to obviate their objections and excuſes. Till we come to this, preaching will be attended with little ſucceſs.

2. The moral diſcourſes of preachers are often *defective*; for beſides that they handle morality in a ſuperficial manner, there are ſome eſſential articles which they ſeldom or never ſpeak of, among which we may reckon

* *Cicero de orat. lib.* 2. non enim, ſicut argumentum, ſimul atque poſitum eſt, arripitur, alterumque & tertium poſcitur, ita miſericordiam, aut invidiam, aut iracundiam ſimulat quę intuleris, poſſis commovere. Argumentum enim ipſa ratione confirmat, quæ ſimul atque emiſſa eſt adhæreſcit. Illud autem genus orationis, non cognitionem judicis, ſed perturbationem requirit, quam conſequi niſi multa, & varia, & copioſa, & ſimili contentione orationis nemo poteſt. Quare qui aut breviter aut ſummiſſe dicunt, docere judicem poſſunt, commovere non poſſunt.

reckon restitution. The moralities of preachers turn almost together upon four or five heads, tack only some of the grosser sins, such as blasphemies, uncleanness, and such other vices. But this is to confine themselves, to the first elements of piety and morality. True morality goes a great deal further. Piety does not only banish the more heinous sins; it does besides fill the heart with a sincere love of virtue; it softens and rectifies the inclinations, it produces in a man, gentleness, humility, patience, resignation to the will of God, divine love, tranquility under all events, charity towards other men, and a zeal for justice and goodness. This is the main of piety, this is what should incessantly be laid before Christians, to make them apprehend the extent and perfection of the morals of the gospel.

3. The moral discourses of preachers are *false*. 1. When they are too remiss; 2. When they are too severe; and 3. When they are contradictory. Their morality is too remiss, when it does not propose all the duties of holiness in their full latitude, when it flatters sinners, or does not sufficiently awaken their consciences. It is over-severe, when it raises groundless scruples in men's minds; when it represents as a sin, that which is not really so; or when it makes a necessary duty of any thing, which may be omitted without danger. Preachers likewise over-do things, in the pictures they draw for virtues and vices. If they are to speak of covetousness or forbidden pleasure, they strive to make of these the most hideous pictures they can; they paint out a covetous or a voluptuous man as a monster, they affect the most lively descriptions and figures, and their sermons are loaded with every thing that their collections afford upon the subject. But all this is only noise, and so much breath spent in vain. Such morality does not hinder the voluptuous or covetous man from pursuing his ordinary course, it is rather apt to harden him in it; because as he does not see himself in the dismal picture which is made of these vices, so he thinks himself free from them, or at least not very guilty of them. Lastly, preachers do sometimes deliver contradictory morals. Having not sufficiently meditated upon the principles of religion and morality, they run themselves into contradictions; they say one thing in one place, and the contrary in another; they lay down principles which destroy the consequences they will draw from them, or they draw consequences which overturn the principles they have laid down.

II. The faults I have hitherto observed, relate to the matter of preaching; those which are committed in the manner are not indeed so essential, but yet they are important enough to deserve some notice here.

It is to no purpose to preach pure doctrine and good morality, if this is not done in a proper way to instruct and to persuade. The most important truths lose their force in the mouth of a man, who either cannot speak of them in a suitable manner, or expresses them obscurely. And so likewise the way of exhorting and censuring, is often the reason why exhortations and censures prove ineffectual. Either they are not accurate or convincing enough, or they are cold and languid, or they are not seasoned with prudence and mildness; but are a kind of fire, which has more of anger and indiscretion, than of true zeal in it, and which offends more, than it affects or persuades the hearers.

Divers considerations might be here insisted upon concerning the way of preaching; but I think what is most material to be said on this subject, may be reduced to this one thing; that the manner of preaching is not simple and natural enough. The way of preaching should correspond with the design of religion and sermons, which is to inform the understanding, and to move the heart. This end is attained by those, who think and speak clearly and naturally, when every thing, in reasoning, method, style, and exterior, is regulated by nature and true sense. But it has been observed long ago, that preachers are particularly apt to fail in this respect. False and confused ideas, unaccurate reasonings, strained or impertinent reflections, forced and unnatural expressions, are almost become the property of that order of men. One would think that most preachers take pains not to follow nature; as if a man was no sooner in the pulpit, but he must speak no longer like the rest of mankind, as if the part of a preacher was something like that of a prophet among the Jews. Nay this is passed into a proverb; so that odd ways and injudicious reflections, are called ways and reflections of preachers.

1. If nature was consulted, and if men did consider the end of preaching, they would see in the first place, that the method which is followed by many, in the explaining of Scripture and the composing of sermons, had need be reformed in some respects, and that it does not agree so well as it should, with the simplicity of the Gospel. For instance, why should time be wasted in exordiums and preliminaries? Why should a preacher dwell upon the explaining of words and phrases which every body understands, or upon prefling the least circumstances of a text? What signify those needless digressions, those objections which no body thinks of, those citations and stories, which in some countries fill up sermons, and so many other small niceties, which clog these kind of discourses? All this might be let alone, without prejudice to publick edification.

2. It is for want of consulting nature, that preachers are obscure. Sometimes the obscurity of their sermons arises from the things they speak of, when they are obscure in themselves. But at other times this obscurity proceeds, from their not having distinct ideas of the subjects they treat. Their style and language do also contribute much to make them dark. Some use scholastical words and terms of art, which are arabick to the people; others delight in figurative and improper expressions, which present false ideas to the mind. Now they might avoid all these faults, if they did not forsake nature and simplicity. But some preachers affect the saying new and singular things, and they would be sorry if they had made use of simple and common ideas, reasonings and expressions, which yet are the clearest and the best.

3. False eloquence proceeds from the same source. Preachers commonly aim at eloquence; and it is to compass this end, that they take such pains in the composing and delivery of their sermons, and that they affect a style, a pronunciation and gestures, which become a stage-player or a prophane orator, much better than a minister of Jesus Christ. I might remark here, that this affectation of eloquence, is not very suitable to the spirit of piety, which should animate a Clergy-man. But not to moralize upon this, I shall observe that these preachers miss their mark, by making so much work, and by using such mighty endeavours

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to hit it. True eloquence, the force of a diſcourſe, an elevated and ſublime ſtyle, conſiſts in following nature. Nothing admits of greater vehemence and loftineſs than the ſubjects which religion affords. Let a preacher be well acquainted with theſe, let him go about them in an eaſy and natural way, but eſpecially let him feel and be thoroughly affected with them; and he needs not trouble himſelf about any other helps; he will deſpiſe all the falſe ſparkling, and the vain ornaments of inſipid and boyiſh eloquence, and he will not be capable of ſpeaking like a grammar ſcholar, or a declaimer. All that which coſts preachers ſo much labour, flights of wit, refined thoughts, ingenious deſcriptions, polite language, all that, I ſay, is very mean. By ſuch things they may raiſe at moſt a vain admiration, but they will never inſtruct nor convert a ſinner. One dram of good ſenſe is worth more than all that.

4. Some preachers run into another extreme, their way of preaching is neglected and coarſe; they think to juſtify themſelves, by ſaying, that they are ſimple and popular, that they ſpeak naturally and without art. But they ſwerve as much from nature as the others; and as it is a fault to be affected, it is another to be flat, homely and barbarous: it is as much againſt nature, to uſe ridiculous and offenſive geſtures, tones and ways, or to ſtand without motion or action in the pulpit, as it is to play the declaimer there.

I might add other conſiderations about the manner in which the Goſpel ought to be preached, but I ſhould engage too far in this ſubject. We may judge now whether ignorance and corruption do not proceed from the defects of thoſe who preach the Goſpel. The people have ſcarce any notion of religion, but what they gather from ſermons. If ſermons then are not inſtructive and edifying, either becauſe all the truths and duties of Chriſtianity are not propoſed in them, or becauſe they are ill propoſed, the people muſt of neceſſity be very much in the dark.

I ſhall ſay one word more concerning the inſtruction which paſtors owe their flocks. Publick inſtructions, how uſeful ſoever they may be, are not ſufficient. The edification of the Church requires, that upon certain occaſions, paſtors ſhould likewiſe inſtruct in private. This neceſſity of private inſtructions, may be proved by the following arguments. 1. If there be none but publick inſtructions, and exhortations, what inſtruction can a great many perſons receive, who either do not frequent, or do not hearken to ſermons? What will become of thoſe who hear, but do not underſtand what they hear, or who underſtand it, but forget it preſently, and ſo do not practiſe it? 2. All things cannot be ſaid in ſermons, how particular ſoever they may be; yet ſtill many things remain untouched. Nay, there are matters which a preacher cannot bring into the pulpit. Can he enumerate all the caſes in which injuſtice may be committed, or reſtitution is to be made? Can he ſpecify thoſe infinite frauds which are practiſed in men's ſeveral callings and trades? Can all caſes of conſcience, about which the hearers want inſtruction, be decided in a ſermon? Dare we inſiſt in the pulpit upon the head of impurity? And may not this be one of the reaſons why that ſin is ſo common? If Chriſtians then have no opportunity to be inſtructed in private about theſe articles, they will be ignorant with relation to them as long as they live. 3. In order to good inſtruction it is neceſſary, that the teacher and

those who are taught, should communicate their thoughts to one another. For the hearers may have their doubts; they may sometimes be at a stand, by reason of something which they do not know, or of some difficulty which starts up in their minds. Some have been hearing sermons for these twenty or thirty years, who yet entertain scruples and doubts concerning the fundamentals of religion. If such persons receive no other information, they will not be moved by any thing that is said in publick, but they will retain their scruples to their dying day.

All this shews that private instruction is a part of the pastoral care: and the practice of it would certainly be very useful, not only for the edification of the people, but also to keep the Clergy from growing amiss, and to make them more diligent in the discharge of their office. For when they have nothing to do but to preach sermons, it is much to be feared, considering men's propension to laziness, that they will become negligent. It is therefore an unhappiness, that private instructions should be almost out of use, and that there should be so little communication about religious matters, between the people and their ministers. We have no instruction remaining, but what is delivered from the pulpit; and that would not be sufficient, even tho' sermons were such as they ought to be. But when private instructions are wanting, and when sermons are defective besides, it is impossible but that the greatest part of Christians, being destitute of necessary informations and aids, must live in corruption.

II. The second function of pastors, which should perhaps be named in the first place, is the conduct and government of the Church. Upon this I observe. First, That those do not understand the nature of the pastoral office, who confine it to preaching. There was a time when preaching was quite laid aside, and when Church-men did only perform divine service. But now a-days in many Churches, the whole ministry is placed in the business of sermons, and the ecclesiasticks are looked upon, not as pastors, but preachers; as men whose office it is upon certain days and hours, to speak in the Church. Preaching is without dispute, a part of the office of pastors. But it is a great mistake to think, that God has appointed them only to preach; for they are entrusted besides with the government of the Church, and this part of their employment is at least, as essential as preaching. It is remarkable, that the scripture speaks of pastors in divers places, and that the titles it gives them, and the functions it ascribes to them, relate chiefly to the government of the Church. This is implyed in the name of bishops, priests, or elders, guides and pastors. St. *Paul* has writ concerning the duties of the ministry: if we examine what he says of the functions of that charge, and of the qualifications of those who are to be admitted into it; we shall find that he is much larger upon the government of the Church, than upon preaching. To this purpose, the epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus* may be consulted.

But further, all Church-men are not called to preaching. The apostles distinguish their functions; they tell us, * *That all are not doctors, that all do not interpret, that all do not administer the word, that all do not teach and exhort; that some are appointed to instruct, to exhort, and to expound the scriptures to others.*

* See 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6, 28, 29, 30. Acts vi. 2, &c. Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. 1 Tim. v. 17.

others to govern, and others to do works of charity. Though we ſhould ſuppoſe that there is nothing in this, which relates to the extraordinary gifts conferred upon the firſt miniſters of the Goſpel, and to the order which was then obſerved; yet it is plain that theſe places are to be underſtood, of the gifts and functions of ordinary paſtors.

This is confirmed by the practice of the primitive Church. The principal and the moſt general function of paſtors then, was the inſpection and governing of the Church. Preaching was not neglected, but all Church-men were not preachers, this province was committed to thoſe who were fit for it. Would to God this diſtinction was ſtill obſerved! The Church would be better governed, and the Goſpel better preached than it is. There are talents requiſite to preach the Goſpel, which every body has not, and others are neceſſary for the conduct of the Church; and all theſe gifts ſeldom meet in one perſon. If then no regard is had to different gifts and functions, if without diſtinction every thing is committed to one perſon, it is viſible that the Church will be ill edified. Beſides that I have ſhewed in the firſt chapter of this ſecond part, that it is a dangerous notion, which reſtrains the miniſtry to preaching. But to remove this inconveniency it would be neceſſary, that a competent number of eccleſiaſticks ſhould be had in every Church.

1. To expreſs my thoughts more particularly concerning the office of paſtors, with relation to the government of the Church; I obſerve, firſt, That diſcipline is worn out of uſe, as I have ſhewn at large in a chapter upon that ſubject. It is true, that this defect is not wholly to be imputed to paſtors. If they do not govern the Church by a good diſcipline, it is becauſe they have been deprived of their authority. Many of them are ſenſible of this diſorder and lament it: but what can they do when they exerciſe their miniſtry in places where their hands are tied up, where they dare not refuſe the ſacrament to an adulterer, and where they ſhould bring themſelves into great troubles, and perhaps be depoſed, if they took upon them, to obſerve the apoſtolical diſcipline? They are forced then to confine themſelves to preaching, which when it is not backed with diſcipline, can never have that effect which it would produce in conjunction with it. There was nothing left to paſtors but what could not be taken from them without aboliſhing the whole miniſtry: all that remains is only preaching and adminiſtring the ſacraments. And yet for all that, a great part of the Clergy may juſtly be charged with that fault we complain of, and with that corruption of the people which is a conſequence of it: (ſince there are thoſe among them, who oppoſe the reſtoration of diſcipline, and look upon it as an indifferent order; and others who are placed in Churches, where ſome form of diſcipline is left, render the exerciſe of it ineffectual, either through imprudence and exceſſive ſeverity, or through a ſhameful remiſneſs, and a cowardly indulgence.

2. Beſides the publick, there is a private diſcipline, which conſiſts in inſpecting the lives of private perſons, in viſiting families, in exhortations, warnings, reconciliations, and in all thoſe other cares, which a paſtor ought to take of thoſe over whom he is conſtituted. For neither general exhortations, nor publick diſcipline can anſwer all the occaſions of the Church. There are certain diſorders, which paſtors neither can, nor ought to redreſs openly, and which yet ought to be remedied by them. In ſuch

caſes private admonitions are to be uſed. The concern of men's ſalvation requires this, and it becomes the paſtoral carefulneſs, to ſeek the ſtraying ſheep, and not to let the wicked periſh for want of warning. But theſe are cares to which ſome paſtors do not ſo much as think themſelves obliged; they content themſelves with admoniſhing ſinners from the pulpit. There is very little intercourſe between paſtors and thoſe who are committed to their charge. Private perſons live without being accountable for their conduct to any body; and except they commit the greateſt enormities, they fancy no man has a right to enquire into their actions. Nothing reaches them but ſermons, and theſe they mind as much, and as little as they pleaſe; this muſt needs produce licentiouſneſs.

The viſiting of ſick and dying perſons, is one of the moſt important functions of the office of paſtors; but when it is not performed with exactneſs and zeal, it contributes as much as can be imagined to the keeping up of ſecurity. Every one muſt needs ſee, of what conſequence this part of the miniſtry is, if he conſiders that it is at the end of life that we are to be judged, and that our eternal ſtate depends upon the condition we die in: and if we reflect at the ſame time upon what the ſcripture tells us, * *that we ſhall receive in the world to come, according to the good or evil we have done in this*; we ſhall eaſily apprehend, what miniſters ought to do, when they viſit ſick and dying perſons. Their chief buſineſs ſhould be, to diſcover what ſtate thoſe perſons are in, that they may ſuit their exhortations to it. Then is it that they ought to ſpeak to the conſcience of ſinners, and to perſuade them by all poſſible means, to examine their lives, and the diſpoſition they are in, in reference to their ſalvation. And when a miniſter meets, as it happens too frequently, with ſick perſons, who are engaged and hardned in vitious habits, or whoſe repentance may juſtly be queſtioned; it is then that he had need uſe all his ſkill and prudence, all his zeal and endeavours, to ſave ſouls which are in ſo great danger. Upon ſuch occaſions both the miniſter and the ſick perſon, have need of time, leiſure and freedom, and a haſty diſcourſe of prayer ſignifies nothing.

And now we may judge whether a man diſcharges the office of a paſtor, who only in general exhorts dying perſons to acknowledge themſelves miſerable ſinners, and backs thoſe exhortations with aſſurances of the divine mercy through Jeſus Chriſt, or who only reads ſome forms of exhortations and prayers, as the cuſtom is in ſome places. This method is fitter to lay aſleep than to awaken a guilty conſcience; and this way of exerciſing the miniſtry, overturns the doctrine of a future judgment, and moſt of the principles of religion. A miniſter ſpeaks to a ſick perſon of the pardon of his ſins, he exhorts him to leave the world with joy, he diſcourſes to him of the happineſs of another life, and fills him with the moſt comfortable hopes; and perhaps this ſick perſon is a man loaded with guilt, a wretch who has lived like an Atheiſt, who has committed divers ſins for which he has made no ſatisfaction, who has not practiſed reſtitution, who never knew his religion, and who is actually impenitent. Such a man ought to tremble, and yet ſuch conſolations from the mouth of his paſtor, make him think that he dies in a ſtate of grace.

But if this way of viſiting and comforting the ſick, betrays them into ſecurity,

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

ſecurity, it has the ſame effect upon the ſtanders by, who when they hear the conſolations which are adminiſtered to perſons, whom every body knows not to have led very Chriſtian lives; make a tacit inference, that the ſame things will be ſaid to them, and that their death will be happy, whatſoever their paſt life may have been.

Beſides the want of ability and zeal, there are two things which hinder paſtors from diſcharging towards dying people, the important duties to which their office obliges them: The one is, that commonly paſtors viſit the ſick only in caſes of extremity; and the other is, that they have too little communication with their flocks, and no ſufficient knowledge of the lives and conduct of private perſons; ſo that being ignorant of the ſtate and occaſions of the ſick, they cannot at the approach of death, adminiſter to them wholeſome counſels and exhortations.

Theſe I think are the moſt eſſential defects of paſtors, both in the inſtruction, and in the government of the Church.

Having thus far treated of the duties of the paſtoral charge; I come now to conſider thoſe qualifications, with which paſtors ought to be endued. And theſe are of two ſorts: firſt, The endowments of the mind, by which I mean thoſe abilities and talents, which are neceſſary for the inſtruction and conduct of the Church; and ſecondly, the qualifications of the heart, by which I mean probity and integrity of life.

1. No man queſtions but that abilities and talents are requiſite in thoſe who exerciſe the office of miniſters in the Church. Firſt, Some are neceſſary for preaching the Goſpel, and for the right expounding of ſcripture. Preaching requires a greater extent of knowledge, than is commonly imagined. To preach well, a man ſhould be well ſkilled in languages, hiſtory, divinity, and morality. He ſhould be acquainted with man's heart, he ſhould be of a ſagacious and diſcerning ſpirit, and above all things he ſhould have a true and exact judgment; to ſay nothing of ſome other qualifications, which are neceſſary to every man who ſpeaks in publick.

Neither are theſe endowments ſufficient; particular talents are requiſite for the conduct of the Church. To guide a flock, and to be accountable for the ſalvation of a great number of ſouls, is no ſmall charge, nor an employment which every body is fit for. A man to whom the government of a Church is committed, in whoſe hands the exerciſe of diſcipline is lodged, whoſe duty it is both to exhort and reprove both in publick and in private, and who ought to ſupply all the occaſions of a flock, and to be provided for all emergencies; ſuch a man has need of a great deal of knowledge, zeal and firmneſs, as well as of much wiſdom and prudence, moderation and charity. That all theſe qualifications are requiſite in a paſtor, is evident from the nature of his office; and St. *Paul* teaches it, when he appoints that none ſhall be admitted to this employment, but thoſe in whom they are to be found.

What effect then can the miniſtry have, when it is exerciſed by men who want theſe qualifications, or perhaps have the quite contrary; who are ignorant, who know nothing in matters of diſcipline and morality, who can give no account of a great many things contained in Scripture, and whoſe whole learning is confined to a Commentary; who can neither reaſon true, nor ſpeak clearly; who are either indiſcreet, negligent

or remiſs in the exerciſe of their office? But I do not wonder that theſe qualifications are wanting in moſt Clergy-men. Vaſt numbers who were not cut out for this employment, aſpire to it. And beſides theſe, abilities are not to be acquired without labour and application Now many Church-men are shamefully idle; they look upon their profeſſion as a mean to live eaſy, ſo that declining the duties of their place, they content themſelves with the incomes of it. Thoſe who are to preach are more employed; but their ſermons are almoſt their whole buſineſs: their work conſiſts for the moſt part in copying ſome Commentaries, and as ſoon as they have acquired a little habit and facility of ſpeaking in publick, almoſt all of them give over ſtudy and labour. We may almoſt make the ſame judgment of thoſe eccleſiaſticks, who tho' they ſtudy hard, yet do not direct their ſtudies to the edification of the Church. The learning and the ſtudies of divines, I ſpeak of thoſe chiefly who have cure of ſouls, is often vain, and of no uſe for the edifying of their flocks. They apply themſelves to things ſuitable to their inclinations, and their ſtudies are but their amuſement, or their diverſion. Now he who neglects the duties of his calling, and purſues other employments, differs very little from him who does nothing at all.

II. Probity is not leſs neceſſary to paſtors, than knowledge and ability; and this probity ought to have three degrees.

1. The firſt is, That paſtors give no ill example, and that their life be blameleſs. This is the firſt qualification which St. *Paul* requires in thoſe who aſpire to this holy office. * *Let a Biſhop*, ſays he, *be blameleſs*; that is, his manners ought to be ſuch that he may not juſtly be charged with any vice, or give any ſcandal. Then the Apoſtle ſpecifies the faults from which a paſtor ought to be free; *not given to wine, no ſtriker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient; not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own houſe, having his children in ſubjection with all gravity, and who is not lifted up with pride and ſelf-conceit.*

Every body knows how much might be ſaid, if the conduct of Clergy-men was to be examined upon all theſe heads. Are not many of them ſcandalous by the irregularity of their manners? How groſs and ſhameful ſoever the ſin of drunkenneſs may be, yet do they never commit it, and is not this vice very common among them in ſome Countries? Are not ſome of them furious and paſſionate in their actions and words? Do we never obſerve in them a ſordid covetouſneſs, and an exceſſive ſtudy of ſelf-intereſt? Are their families always well ordered? Are not poſitiveneſs and pride very remarkable in ſome perſons of that profeſſion? Is there not often juſt cauſe to complain, that they are implacable in their hatred, that they have little charity; and that there is leſs propenſion, and more of gentleneſs and true zeal to be found among lay-men, than among divines? I ſay nothing of ſome other faults which are not leſs ſcandalous in Church-men; as when they are given to ſwearing, when they are diſſolute and undecently free in their words, when they are wedded to divertiſements and pleaſures, worldly-minded, lazy, crafty, unjuſt and cenſorious.

When ſuch vices appear in the lives of Clergy-men it is the greateſt of ſcandals; from that minute the Goſpel becomes of no effect in their mouths,

* 1 Tim. iii. Tit. i.

mouths, the laws of God are trampled upon, the moſt ſacred things are no longer reſpected, divine worſhip and the ſacraments are profaned, the miniſtry grows vile, religion in general falls under contempt, and the people being no longer curbed by the reverence due to it, give up themſelves to an entire licentiouſneſs. I confeſs that Chriſtians ought to follow the doctrine rather than the example of their guides, and that it is poſſible to profit by the inſtructions of a man, who does not practiſe what he teaches. But every body has not diſcretion and firmneſs enough, to ſeparate thus the doctrine from the example, and not to be ſhaken by the ſcandal occaſioned by Church-men, when their life and their preaching contradict each other. Men are very much taken with outſides, and govern themſelves more by imitation than reaſon. A great many perſons want nothing but pretexts and excuſes, to juſtifie them in all things; and there is no pretence more ſpecious, than that which the ill lives of the miniſters of religion afford. When the people ſee men who are inceſſantly ſpeaking of God and recommending piety, and yet do not practiſe themſelves what they preach, they reject all that comes from them, they fancy that the Goſpel is preached only for form's-ſake, and that the maxims of religion may be ſafely violated.

2. But St. *Paul* requires ſomewhat more in paſtors, than not to be ſcandalous; this is but the firſt and the loweſt degree of probity. He would have them beſides to be adorned with all manner of virtues. * *To be vigilant, prudent, grave, modeſt, and given to hoſpitality, gentle, charitable, lovers of good men, wiſe, juſt, holy and chaſte, ſhewing themſelves in all things patterns of good works, of purity, gravity, and integrity.* And indeed paſtors are not only appointed to inſtruct and govern their flocks, but they are obliged beſides to ſet them a good example, and to be their patterns; and they do not edifie leſs by their good examples, than by their exhortations. The purity of their manners, and the regularity of their conduct, give a great weight, to all the functions of their miniſtry, theſe make their perſons venerable, and engage a great many to imitate them. Now whether theſe qualifications are to be found in paſtors, every body may judge. I except thoſe who ought to be excepted, but for the generality, Wherein do Church-men differ from other men? Do they diſtinguiſh themſelves by a regular and exemplary life? Their exterior indeed is ſomething different, they live more retired, they preſerve a little decorum, though even this is not done by all; but as for the reſt, are they not as much addicted to the world, and taken up with earthly things, have they not as many humane and ſecular views, are they not as much wedded to intereſt and other paſſions as the bulk of Chriſtians are?

3. This ſecond degree of probity is not ſufficient. The life of an hypocrite may be blameleſs and even edifying; by compoſing his exterior he may paſs for a ſaint. There is therefore a third degree, and that is the rectitude of the heart, a good conſcience, a great meaſure of true piety, devotion, humility and zeal. Paſtors ought to be in private, inwardly and in the ſight of God, what they appear to other men. And certainly none can have greater inducements to piety, than a man whoſe ordinary buſineſs it is to meditate upon religion, to ſpeak of it to others, to

* Tim. iii. &c. Tit. i. and ii.

to reprove hypocriſie and vice; to perform divine ſervice, to adminiſter the ſacraments, to viſit afflicted and dying people; and to give an account to God of a great number of ſouls. I do not know whether there is a higher degree of impiety and hypocriſie, than when a man who is in theſe circumſtances is not a good man. Such a man makes but ſport with the moſt ſacred things in religion, he does properly play the part of a Comedian, and of an hypocrite all his life. No profeſſion damns more certainly, than that of a Church-man, when it is thus exerciſed.

It may perhaps be ſaid, that all theſe moralities are nothing to my purpoſe; that this third degree of probity, is neceſſary only for the ſalvation of paſtors in particular, and that as the people are unacquainted with the inward diſpoſitions of their teachers, and are not able to diſtinguiſh true from counterfeit piety, it is enough for their edification, that the exterior ſhould be well regulated. But thoſe who think this, are very much miſtaken. This want of piety and devotion is capital; and here we find the main Cauſe of the remiſneſs of paſtors, and of the Corruption of the people. From whence do thoſe faults proceed which we have obſerved in Clergy-men? How comes it to paſs that ſome of them are ignorant and lazy, that others apply themſelves to unprofitable ſubjects and ſtudies, that others preach only out of vanity, and that their diſcourſes are languid and jejune? All this, is becauſe their hearts are void of devotion and piety.

There are ſome preaching matters, and thoſe too the moſt edifying, which can never be well managed, but by a man animated with ſincere piety. Thoſe preachers who deſcribe the beauty of virtue, or the happy ſtate of a good conſcience, the hopes of another life, or the neceſſity of working out one's ſalvation, and who are not affected and pierced thorough with what they ſay, do but ſtammer about theſe things, and they will hardly excite thoſe motions in other men's hearts, which they never felt in their own. We cannot preach with ſucceſs without knowing the heart of man, and this knowledge ought to be the chief ſtudy of thoſe who preach the Goſpel. But the ſureſt and moſt compendious way to know man's heart aright, is to conſult our own, to reflect upon our ſelves, and to have a ſpotleſs conſcience: without this a man is ſtill a novice and a bungler in preaching. And ſo in the exerciſe of diſcipline; in private exhortations, in the viſiting of the ſick, in prayers, and in all other paſtoral functions, there is ſtill ſomething defective, when a man does not perform them, out of a principle of charity, but only to diſcharge the outward obligations which his office lays upon him.

Pious and good Church-men, who are not on the other hand deſtitute of gifts, fulfill much better the duties of their miniſtry. A paſtor who loves his profeſſion, who lays the functions of it to heart, who is thoroughly convinced of the truths of religion, and who practiſes the rules of it; who in private humbles himſelf before God, and ardently implores his bleſſing; who is ever intent upon ſeeking means to edify the Church; who turns all his meditation that way; who thinks day and night of the neceſſities of his flock; muſt needs be ſucceſsful, he has in himſelf the principle of all benedictions and happy ſucceſs. When he is ſpeaking or exhorting, it is his heart that ſpeaks, and the language of the

the heart, has a kind of eloquence and perſuaſiveneſs in it, which is ſoon diſcerned by the hearers, and which always raiſes a pious and a zealous preacher, above a mercenary and hypocritical one. The want of piety in paſtors, is therefore the principal ſource of the faults they commit, and of the miſchiefs which proceed from their remiſneſs.

Whoſoever will ſeriouſly and without prejudice conſider all that I have now ſaid, muſt own, that the Cauſe of the Corruption of Chriſtians is chiefly to be found in the Clergy. I do not mean to ſpeak here of all Church-men indifferently. We muſt do right to ſome, who diſtinguiſh themſelves by their talents, their zeal and the holineſs of their lives. But the number of theſe is not conſiderable enough to ſtop the courſe of thoſe diſorders which are occaſioned in the Church by the vaſt multitudes of remiſs and corrupt paſtors. Theſe pull down, what the others endeavour to build up. Some perhaps will aſk, Whence do all theſe faults of the Clergy proceed? In anſwer to this queſtion, I have three things to ſay.

1. It ought not to be thought ſtrange, that paſtors ſhould not fulfill all the obligations of their office. As things are conſtituted almoſt every where with relation to diſcipline, to the inſpection and authority over private perſons, to the viſiting of the ſick, and to ſome other parts of their employment, they cannot if they would diſcharge their duties. Neither the magiſtrates nor the people would ſuffer it. On the other hand, the defects of paſtors, are the conſequences of the contempt and abaſement which their office is brought under, as well as of the poverty they live in. This contempt and poverty diſcourage a great many, who might otherwiſe conſiderably edify the Church; and they are the cauſe why multitudes, who have neither education, nor talents, nor eſtates, dedicate themſelves to the miniſtry of the Goſpel. It is commonly imagined, that all ſorts of perſons are good enough for the Church; and whereas the *Jews* did offer their moſt excellent things to God, among Chriſtians, what is leaſt valued is conſecrated to God and the Church. Some are devoted to the holieſt and the moſt exalted of all profeſſions, who would not be thought capable of an employment of any conſideration in the Common-wealth. If then we intend to remedy the faults of the Clergy, we ſhould begin with redreſſing what is defective in the ſtate of the Church and religion in general.

2. Many eccleſiaſticks fail in the duties of their calling, becauſe they do not know what it obliges them to; and this they do not know, becauſe it was never taught them. There are indeed ſchools, academies and univerſities, which are deſigned to inſtruct thoſe young men, who aſpire to this profeſſion; but I cannot tell whether ſchools and academies, as they are ordered almoſt every where, do not do more hurt than good. For firſt, as to manners, young people live there licentiouſly, and are left to their own conduct. The care of maſters and profeſſors, does not extend to the regulating of the manners of their diſciples. And this diſorder is ſo great, that in ſeveral univerſities of *Europe*, the ſcholars and ſtudents make publick profeſſion of diſſoluteneſs. They not only live there irregularly, but they have privileges, which give them a right to commit with impunity, all manner of inſolencies, brutalities and ſcandals, and which exempt them from the magiſtrates juriſdiction. It is

is a ſhame to Chriſtianity, that princes and Church-men ſhould not have yet aboliſhed thoſe cuſtoms and eſtabliſhments, which ſmell ſo rank of the ignorance and barbariſm of the Heathens. And yet theſe univerſities are the nurſeries out of which paſtors, doctors and profeſſors are taken. Thoſe ſcholars who neither have birth, nor ſenſe of virtue or honour, and who have ſpent their youth in licentiouſneſs and debauchery, ſpread themſelves into all Churches, and become the depoſitaries, and in ſome meaſure the arbitrators of religion.

As to the ſtudies which are purſued at univerſities, I obſerve in them theſe two faults. The firſt relates to the method of teaching. Divinity is treated there and the holy Scripture explained in a ſcholaſtical and altogether ſpeculative manner. Common-places are read, which are full of ſchool-terms, and of queſtions not very material. There young men learn to diſpute upon every thing, and to reſolve all religion into controverſies. Now this method ruins them, it gives them intricate and falſe notions of divinity, and it begets in them diſpoſitions directly oppoſite to thoſe which are neceſſary to find out truth.

The other fault is more eſſential: little or no care is taken in academies, to teach thoſe who dedicate themſelves to the ſervice of the Church, ſeveral things, the knowledge of which would be very neceſſary to them. The ſtudy of hiſtory and of Church antiquity, is neglected there.

Hence it is that moſt divines may be compared with people, who having never travelled, know no other cuſtoms or ways of living but thoſe which obtain in their countries. As ſoon as you take theſe divines out of their common-places, they are in a maze, and every thing ſeems new and ſingular to them. Morality is not taught in divinity-ſchools, but in a ſuperficial and ſcholaſtick manner; and in many academies it is not taught at all. They ſeldom ſpeak there of diſcipline, they give few or no inſtructions concerning the manner of exerciſing the paſtoral care, or of governing the Church. So that the greater part of thoſe who are admitted into this office, enter into it without knowing wherein it conſiſts; all the notion they have of it, is, that it is a profeſſion, which obliges them to preach, and to explain texts. It was therefore to be wiſhed, that for the glory of God, and the good of the Church, ſchools and univerſities ſhould be reformed, and that the manners and ſtudies of young people, ſhould be better regulated in thoſe places. This reformation would not be impoſſible, if divines and profeſſors would uſe their endeavours about it. But thoſe kind of eſtabliſhments are not eaſily altered. The ordinary method is continued, and things are done as they were of old, becauſe men are willing to keep their places, and the ſtipends which are annexed to them.

3. The third and principal remedy would be to uſe greater caution, than is commonly done, when men are to be admitted into eccleſiaſtical offices. The firſt qualification to which, according to St. *Paul*, regard is to be had, is probity and integrity of life. The perſons therefore who offer themſelves, ſhould in the firſt place be examined in relation to manners, and to all thoſe moral diſpoſitions, which St. *Paul* requires in them, and thoſe ſhould be excluded in whom they are not found. But this article is commonly ſlubbered over, and a young man muſt have been

been very diſſolute, if he is refuſed upon the account of immorality. So that the moſt ſacred of all characters, is conferred upon many perſons, who according to the divine laws, ought to be rejected.

The other part of the examination of Candidates, relates to their ability and talents. Now in order to judge of their capacity, it is not enough to enquire whether they know their common-place-book, or whether they can make a ſermon; it would be neceſſary beſides to examine them about the fundamentals of religion, about hiſtory, diſcipline, the holy Scripture and morality. All theſe are important matters, the knowledge of which is of daily uſe with reference to practice, and in the exerciſe of the ſacred miniſtry. But they are not inſiſted upon. The examination turns upon ſome trials about preaching, and upon ſome heads of divinity which are ſcholaſtically handled, by arguments and diſtinctons: after which if the Candidate has ſatisfied in ſome meaſure, ordination follows.

Now when ſuch inſufficient perſons are once admitted the miſchief is done, and there is no remedy. Theſe men are afterwards appointed paſtors in Churches, where for 30 or 40 years, they deſtroy more than they edify. How many churches are there thus ill provided, where the people live in groſs ignorance, where the youth are loſt for want of inſtruction, and where a thouſand crimes are committed! The cauſe of all this evil, is in the ordination of paſtors.

It will no doubt be objected, That if none were to be admitted but thoſe, who have all the neceſſary qualifications, there would not be a ſufficient number of paſtors, for all the Churches. To which I anſwer, That though this ſhould happen, yet it was better to run into this inconvenience than to break the expreſs laws of God. A ſmall number of ſelect paſtors, is to be preferred before a multitude of unworthy labourers. We are ſtill to do what God commands, and to leave the event to Providence. But after all, this ſcarcity of paſtors is not ſo much to be feared. Such a ſtrictneſs will only diſcourage thoſe, who would never have been uſeful in the Church, and it is a thing highly commendable to diſhearten ſuch perſons: but this exactneſs will encourage thoſe, who are able to do well, and the miniſtry will be ſo much the more eſteemed and ſought after.

CAUSE IV.

The Defects of Chriſtian Princes and Magiſtrates.

IF it had been poſſible without an eſſential omiſſion, not to have detected this Cauſe of Corruption, I would have paſſed it over in ſilence. We ought not to ſpeak of the higher powers, but with great diſcretion and reſpect: and therefore it is not without ſome kind of reluctancy, that I ſuppoſe in the title of this Chapter, that one of the Cauſes of Corruption is to be found in Chriſtian Princes and Magiſtrates.

giſtrates. But if I had ſuppreſt this, I ſhould have diſſembled a moſt important truth, and omitted one of the heads, which are the moſt neceſſary to be inſiſted upon in a work of this nature. By reaſon of the rank which princes and magiſtrates hold, they have always a great ſhare in the good or ill manners of the people. And ſo I cannot excuſe my ſelf from ſhewing, that the Corruption of Chriſtians may partly be imputed to thoſe, who are ordained for the government of Civil Society. In order to this I ſhall offer ſome reflections upon the duty of princes and magiſtrates, conſidered, 1. As Civil, and 2. As Chriſtian Magiſtrates.

Although the inſtitution of princes and magiſtrates does properly relate to civil matters; yet the manner of governing their people, has a great influence upon the things of religion. This cannot be queſtioned, if we ſuppoſe this principle; That God who is the author of the religion, is alſo the author of civil ſociety and magiſtracy. It is St. *Paul*'s doctrine, * *That there is no power but of God, and that the powers that be are ordained of God.* If God is the author of religion, and of civil ſociety, he is alſo the author of thoſe laws upon which both religion and civil ſociety are founded. Now God being always conſiſtent with himſelf, the laws which are derived from him, cannot contradict one another; and this ſhews already, not only that there is no oppoſition between religion and civil ſociety, but that theſe two things have, beſides, a neceſſary relation to one another. This will yet more clearly appear, if we conſider that religion does not cut off Chriſtians from the ſociety of other men, and that the Church does not conſtitute a ſtate by it ſelf, to have nothing to do with civil ſociety; but that thoſe who are members of the Church, are likewiſe members of civil ſociety, ſo that the ſame man is at the ſame time both a Chriſtian and a Citizen.

But it is chiefly neceſſary to conſider the nature of the Chriſtian religion. 1. It was to be preached to all men, and to be received by all the world, without diſtinction of nations, kingdoms, or ſtates. In order to this, two things were neceſſary. Firſt, that there ſhould be nothing in religion, contrary to the natural conſtitution of ſtates and of civil ſociety. For elſe, God by ordering the Goſpel to be preached, would have deſtroyed his own work, Chriſtianity could not have taken footing in the world, and the firſt Chriſtians would have been juſtly looked upon, as ſeditious perſons. But it is not leſs neceſſary on the other hand, that there ſhould be nothing repugnant to the Chriſtian religion, in the natural conſtitution of ſtates and civil ſociety; otherwiſe God by eſtabliſhing ſociety, would have put an inſuperable obſtacle to the planting of the Goſpel, unleſs the civil order and government had been altered. But our Saviour has aſſured us that there was to be no ſuch thing, by declaring † *That his kingdom was not of this world*, and by commanding his followers, ‡ *to render to Cæſar the things which are Cæſars.*

2. One of the chief precepts of the Chriſtian religion is, ‖ *That all men ſhould obey and be ſubject to the higher powers.* Now this precept could not

* Rom. xiii. 1.
† John xviii.
‡ Mat. xxii.
‖ Rom. xiii.

not poſſibly be obſerved, if in the natural eſtabliſhment of civil ſociety, there was ſomething incompatible, with the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. * *No man can ſerve two maſters*, when they command contrary things. But St. *Paul* goes further, he tells us, That the preſervation of kings, and the ſubmitting to their authority is a mean for Chriſtians † *to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty.*

3. It is remarkable, that whatever is good, and juſt in the civil, is ſo likewiſe in the religious ſociety; and that whatever is preſcribed by religion is juſt, and even beneficial to civil ſociety. The law of nature, which is the foundation of civil laws, is confirmed by the Chriſtian religion, and does perfectly agree with the principles and morals of the Goſpel. An evident proof of this, is, that when Chriſtian emperours and law-givers did ſet about the making of laws and conſtitutions, they retained the eſſential parts of the laws and conſtitutions received among the *Romans* and the *Greeks* in the time of Heatheniſm. And to this day, the old *Roman* law is followed among Chriſtians, excepting ſome laws which have been altered or abrogated, either becauſe they were contrary to natural juſtice and equity, or becauſe they were not of a general and neceſſary uſe.

4. It is certain, that religion and civil ſociety, do mutually ſupport one another, when both are well regulated. Religion contributes to the happineſs of ſociety, by rendering the authority of princes more ſacred and inviolable; and the good order of ſociety, contributes to the welfare and the progreſs of religion. Let us ſuppoſe a magiſtrate who loves piety and juſtice; it is plain, that at the ſame time that he promotes the intereſt of religion, he ſtrengthens the welfare of ſociety, and that he cannot procure the good of ſociety, without advancing the intereſt of religion. If we ſuppoſe on the other hand, a magiſtrate who does not act by the principles of religion and juſtice; it is viſible, that by ſuffering religion to be violated or deſpiſed, he ſhakes the ſureſt foundation of his own authority, and of publick tranquility, and that by failing in the duties of his office, and in the exerciſe of juſtice, he makes the people grow vicious and neglect the duties of piety.

From theſe conſiderations it does manifeſtly appear, that princes and magiſtrates may either procure great advantages to religion, or do it a conſiderable prejudice, and that they are in part the authors of the corruption which reigns in the world.

When civil-ſociety is well governed, men are diſpoſed by that very thing to practice the duties of Chriſtianity. In proportion as the people are well ordered, they are more tractable and ſuſceptible of the impreſſions of piety. As they are uſed to be governed by the laws of the magiſtrate, they do the more eaſily ſubmit to the holy diſcipline of Chriſt; yea, and by obeying civil-laws, they do already diſcharge ſome part of the duties of religion. But when princes and magiſtrates, either through ignorance, or want of probity and virtue, give way to the violation of juſtice and good order, it is impoſſible but that religion muſt ſuffer by it. For beſides, that the people cannot break the civil laws, without violating the principles of religion: How can they perform the duties of Chriſtianity, when they do not diſcharge thoſe of nature? It is very hard

* Mat. vi. † Tim. ii. 2.

hard to perſuade people to the obſervation of the precepts of the Goſpel, who do not ſubmit to the laws of natural reaſon and juſtice. It is not to be expected that men who do not order their outward actions aright, ſhould regulate their thoughts and reſiſt their paſſions; or that being ſtrangers to the firſt elements of virtue, they ſhould come up to the practice of the moſt ſublime precepts of Chriſtian morals.

Beſides, the want of order in the adminiſtration of juſtice and government, draws after it all kinds of diſorders with relation to manners, ſuch as diſhoneſty, and what is moſt dangerous, a ſpirit of libertiniſm and independance, which makes men untoward and refractory to good diſcipline. We are to obſerve here that the greateſt part of men's lives are taken up with civil matters. All perſons are bound to obey the magiſtrate, and few are altogether free from law-ſuits and buſineſs; ſo that when the people are not well governed with relation to civil things, they do ſo accuſtom themſelves to live without rule or reſtraint, that religion can no longer have any power over them. The neglect and remiſneſs of princes and magiſtrates do occaſion all this miſchief.

But if the bare careleſneſs of magiſtrates is ſo fatal to ſociety; how muſt it be when they themſelves are vicious and unjuſt, either in their own particular conduct, or in the exerciſe of their office? The greateſt unhappineſs that can befal any people, is, when thoſe who are inveſted with the ſupreme authority, favour injuſtice and vice. It may be ſaid then, that the publick fountains are poyſoned. The whole ſtate is ordered by the ſovereigns; they are thoſe from whom the laws receive their force, who appoint judges and magiſtrates, and who regulate the adminiſtration of juſtice. When inferior magiſtrates prevaricate, this may be remedied by the ſovereign, but when the ſovereign himſelf fails in his duty, no redreſs can be expected.

Not but that ſubordinate officers and magiſtrates, may likewiſe occaſion a great deal of miſchief. If we ſuppoſe in a province, or a town, magiſtrates and judges who want integrity, who conſult only their profit and intereſt in the exerciſe of their offices, who are not proof againſt bribes, who adminiſter juſtice from a principle of covetouſneſs or paſſion, who act by recommendation or favour, and who are full of artifice and diſſimulation; this is enough to introduce and authorize wickedneſs throughout their whole juriſdiction, to pervert right, to baniſh juſtice and honeſty from all courts, to make way for knavery and litigiouſneſs, for the protracting of ſuits, the abuſe and violation of oaths, and many other diſorders. Then it is that vice is in faſhion and repute, that virtue and innocency are oppreſſed, and that the people grow corrupt. Now all this being a direct undermining of religion and piety, let any body judge, whether I have not reaſon to ſay, that the corruption of the age may be imputed to princes or magiſtrates.

But all theſe evils are yet more unavoidable, when the princes or magiſtrates who are the authors of them, profeſs the Chriſtian religion. A heathen magiſtrate has not by much that influence upon religion and manners, that a Chriſtian has. The Church was purer and more ſeparated from the world, when the ſuperior powers were contrary to it; but as ſoon as the emperors had embraced Chriſtianity, piety and zeal did viſibly decay. Not but that religion may receive, and has actually received great

great helps from Chriſtian magiſtrates; they have ſometimes contributed very effectually to the promoting of piety, and thoſe who do ſo, deſerve immortal honour. But it muſt likewiſe be granted, that the vices and ill examples of Chriſtian magiſtrates, corrupt the Church more, than if it were under heathen governors.

The duty of Chriſtian princes and magiſtrates, as well as of all the members of the Church is double. They are bound, firſt, to ſerve God, and to diſcharge the obligations which religion lays upon all men; and ſecondly to take care, that God may be ſerved and honoured by all thoſe who are ſubject to their authority.

1. Every Chriſtian ought to ſerve God and to live according to the precepts of the Goſpel. That very thing then, *that a magiſtrate is chriſtian*, obliges him to be a lover of piety and virtue. It is a common notion, eſpecially among great men, that piety and devotion do not become thoſe who are exalted to dignities, and that publick perſons are not to be ruled by the maxims of religion. But whoſoever maintains this opinion, muſt deny the principles of religion, and be either an Atheiſt or a Deiſt. For ſuppoſing the truth of Chriſtianity, it is beyond all doubt, that Chriſtian prince or magiſtrate, has as much need of piety as other men have. He is bound to be a good man by the ſame duty and intereſt, which engage private men to be ſo; he has a ſoul to be ſaved as well as they; and as he is a publick perſon, he is to give an account of his conduct to that judge, with whom there is no exception of perſons, and before whom the greateſt of monarchs is no more than the meaneſt of ſlaves.

If the eminent ſtation of a magiſtrate makes ſome difference between him and Chriſtians of a lower order, that difference obliges him to a higher degree of piety. The character he bears requires a great ſtock of virtue. No ſmall meaſure of probity is requiſite to acquit himſelf worthily in that calling; to do no injuſtice, not to ſeek in his dignities the means to gratify his intereſt, his vanity, his pride, or his other paſſions. Without a firm and ſolid virtue, he cannot withſtand thoſe temptations which offer themſelves every minute, and which are the more dangerous and ſubtil, becauſe in thoſe exalted poſts, ill things, for the moſt part, may be done with ſafety. If we add to all this, that an ill magiſtrate is anſwerable for the greateſt part of the diſorders which happen, and of the crimes which are committed in ſociety, it muſt be confeſſed that magiſtracy is a kind of life, wherein piety is extreamly neceſſary, and in which, great circumſpection and a ſublime virtue, are the only preſervatives againſt a thouſand opportunities, of tranſgreſſing the duties of conſcience, and violating the moſt ſacred laws of religion and juſtice.

II. It is the duty of Chriſtian princes and magiſtrates, to labour for the promoting of virtue and the ſuppreſſing of vice among men. We have ſhewn already that it is their intereſt to do ſo, ſince religion is the ſureſt foundation of their authority, and of the fidelity of their people; but their duty does beſides indiſpenſably oblige them to this. It cannot be denied but that this obligation lies upon them, ſince every Chriſtian is bound to advance the kingdom of Chriſt, and to edify his neighbours as much as he can in that ſtate and condition he is in. The duty here is anſwerable to the ability, ſo that we may apply to this purpoſe, that maxim of the

Goſpel, * *that to whom ſoever much is given, of him much ſhall be required.* Private men cannot do much towards promoting the glory of God; their zeal and good intentions are for the moſt part uſeleſs; it is not in their power to hinder general diſorders, this ought therefore to be done by men of authority, and they may do it eaſily. Beſides, a Chriſtian magiſtrate is to conſider that it was Providence which raiſed him to the poſt he is in, and that by conſequence he is engaged in juſtice and gratitude, to uſe his authority for the glory of God. Laſtly, would it not be a ſtrange thing, that Chriſtian princes and magiſtrates ſhould do no ſervice to religion, when kings and princes who are not Chriſtians, can do ſo much hurt to it? Now they may advance the kingdom of God and baniſh corruptions, theſe two ways. 1. By their example. 2. By their care.

1. By their example. This method is of great efficacy. Examples are very forcible, but their effect depends for the moſt part upon the quality and character of the perſons they come from. It has been made appear in the foregoing chapter, how much benefit redounds to the Church, from the good lives and examples of the governours of it. But the example of kings, princes, and magiſtrates is in ſome reſpects of greater weight. When a Church-man recommends virtue by an exemplary life, it is often ſaid that his profeſſion obliges him to live ſo, and this conſideration makes his example to be of little force upon worldly-minded men. But when princes and magiſtrates are pious, thoſe men have no ſuch thing to ſay. The ſplendor and authority which ſurround greatneſs, gives much credit to every thing that comes from great men. They may ſometimes do more good with one word, than a preacher can do by many ſermons.

I have ſhewed in the firſt part of this work that one of the greateſt obſtacles to piety, is a falſe ſhame which reſtrains men from doing their duty, for fear of being obſerved and deſpiſed; and I am to ſhew hereafter, that cuſtom has introduced among Chriſtians a great many maxims and practices contrary to the ſpirit of the Goſpel. Theſe two things occaſion corruption, and till they are remedied, vice and impiety muſt ſtill reign. But the example of great men is ſufficient to remove almoſt intirely, both theſe cauſes of corruption. They are the judges of honour and cuſtom; it is in their power to make any thing which is reputed ſhameful, to be thought honourable and to aboliſh that which is generally received. So that how ſcarce and deſpiſed ſoever piety may be, an idea of honour would be affixed to it, if it was favoured and profeſſed by great men, and that would be reſpected in them which in others is looked upon with indifference or contempt.

That which has happened with relation to duels is a ſtrong proof of what I ſay. To decline fighting a duel, has been thought for a long time a diſgrace and an infamy: a falſe notion of honour did then bear down the ſtrongeſt principles of nature, reaſon and Chriſtianity; and drive men to that exceſs of brutality and madneſs, that they would cut one anothers throat for a trifle. But in thoſe places where Chriſtian princes have aboliſhed duels, people are now of another mind, and think it no ſhame to refuſe a challenge. And thus ſwearing, drunkenneſs, and the greateſt of

* Luke xii. 48.

of other clamorous ſins, might be ſuppreſſed, if great men pleaſed. Is it not obſerved beſides, that when a prince is devout, devotion comes into faſhion? It may be that this devotion which proceeds from the example of princes, is not always ſincere; but at leaſt it regulates manners as to the exterior; and ſuch an outward reformation, may be a ſtep toward true devotion. However this ſhews that the opinion and example of men in authority has a great power. And ſurely if by their credit they can make vice it ſelf to be honoured, would it not be much eaſier for them, to make other men honour virtue, ſince it is honourable in its own nature?

I am not able to expreſs of what conſequence the example of great men is, either for good or evil. A prince who is vicious, cruel, diſſolute, artificious or unjuſt, is enough to infect a whole ſtate in a very little time, to baniſh piety from it, and to bring into repute drunkenneſs, lewdneſs, cheating, indevotion, and all the other vices which he allows himſelf in. This we find by daily experience. Such as the prince is, ſo are thoſe about him; and from theſe, the evil ſpreads upon the whole people, by reaſon of the credit and authority to which they were raiſed, and of the influence they have upon publick and private affairs. What might not be ſaid here of the life which is led in the courts of princes? Excepting ſome few courts where licentiouſneſs is not ſuffered. That kind of life which is followed at court for the generality, agrees little with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. People live there altogether in a looſe and wordly manner, in luxury, idleneſs, pomp and pleaſure. There, the ſtrongeſt and the moſt inticing temptations are to be met with, and the moſt criminal intrigues, adultery it ſelf, are rather a matter of railery, than reproach. It is almoſt impoſſible for a man to inſinuate himſelf into the favour of princes, and to advance his fortune at court, unleſs he makes it his maxim to diſſemble his ſentiments, and to ſpeak directly againſt his own thoughts. The worſt of it is, that from thence corruption diffuſes it ſelf almoſt every where; ſo that many diſorders which are in vogue, would be unknown, or at leaſt very rare in the world, if they had not been introduced by that licentiouſneſs, which reigns in the courts of princes.

I come now to the endeavours, which Chriſtian magiſtrates ought to uſe, for the edification of the Church and the reviving of piety; theſe endeavours relate either to civil matters, or to religion.

1. In civil matters, it is their duty to reſtrain libertiniſm and corruption, by regulating the manners of their ſubjects, either by repealing the laws and cuſtoms which do not agree with religion, and which engage the people into the violation of the precepts of the Goſpel, or by reforming the abuſes which are introduced from time to time, particularly thoſe which creep into the adminiſtration of juſtice. In relation to all theſe things, there are ſeveral faults which the Church cannot provide againſt, and which nothing can remedy but the magiſtrates authority.

2. The other care relates directly to religion. 1. Princes and kings profeſſing Chriſtianity, are bound to procure, as much as in them lies, the welfare of the Church. They ought to ſet about the eſtabliſhing of truth and peace, provided that in order to that, they uſe no means but ſuch, as are ſuitable to the Goſpel. They ought by their authority to ſee that the Church and religion want nothing of what is neceſſary, for the maintaining of order and decency; that divine ſervice be duly performed;

that there be both places for that purpoſe and a ſufficient number of perſons to take care of the edification of the Church; that thoſe perſons may ſubſiſt honourably, that they do their duty and keep themſelves within the bounds of their calling. They muſt not ſuffer Church goods or revenues to be applied to uſes meerly civil; and when theſe revenues are not ſufficient, it becomes their piety and juſtice, to allot ſome part of the publick revenues, for the neceſſities of the Church. In fine, as to manners, I obſerved before, that they may eaſily give a ſtop to vice and impiety, to luxury, ſwearing, and other ſcandals which diſhonour the Church. And if they can do this, they ought to do it, every Chriſtian being bound to do all that is in his power, to promote the glory of God.

2. It is certain, that magiſtrates who are members of the Church, ought to protect it, to maintain the order which God has eſtabliſhed in it, and not to ſuffer any breach to be made there. So that tho' they may regulate many things which concern religion, and tho' the Church owes them a great regard, yet they cannot without uſurpation and injuſtice, arrogate to themſelves the whole authority, with relation to the eccleſiaſtical affairs. They are neither the princes nor the heads of the Church, as they are the princes and the heads of civil ſociety. An authority ſuperior to theirs, has inſtituted religion, paſtors and diſcipline. There is a law enacted by the KING of kings, and the head of the Church, which clearly determines the rights and duties, both of the Church and of the governor of it; all theſe are ſacred things, which earthly powers are not to meddle with. They are laws which princes and magiſtrates did ſubmit to, when they became members of the Church; with reſpect to theſe (I mean ſtill eſſential things appointed by the word of God) they have acquired no right by embracing Chriſtianity; ſince he who becomes member of a ſociety, cannot by that acquire right to alter the natural form and conſtitution of it.

The inſtance of the kings of *Judah*, ſhews that a prince who profeſſes true religion, may interpoſe in the affairs of it: but we muſt take care not to carry this inſtance too far, as thoſe do, who aſcribe to the magiſtrate a ſupreme authority in the Church; who allow him a right to order every thing there; not excepting diſcipline, the calling of paſtors, nor even the articles of faith. For beſides that under the law, kings were by no means the judges of every thing, which concerned religion; we are not to argue altogether about the Chriſtian religion, from what was done in the Jewiſh Church. Among the *Jews* the Church and the ſtate were mixed together, and in ſome meaſure undiſtinguiſhed from one another. That meerly ſpiritual ſociety which is called the Church, and which is confined to no ſtate, or people, or any particular form of civil government; was properly erected ſince the coming of Chriſt. God acted among the *Jews* as a civil magiſtrate. The laws of the Jewiſh religion were for the moſt part external laws, which might and ought to be maintained by force and authority. The rights of divine ſervice, and the functions of prieſts, were very different from the evangelical worſhip and from the office of Chriſtian paſtors. After all, if we ſhould go by the practice of the Jewiſh Church, it would follow, that the miniſters of religion are inveſted with civil authority, and a very great authority too. The Jewiſh prieſts held a conſiderable rank in the ſtate as well as in religion.

gion. If upon ſome occaſions kings have depoſed prieſts; upon other occaſions prieſts have oppoſed kings and altered the government.

* So that without preſſing too much thoſe inſtances out of the Old Teſtament, the beſt way is to conſult the NEW, and to proceed according to the laws of the apoſtles, and the nature of the Chriſtian religion. And whoſoever examines without prejudice thoſe ſacred books, which have been writ ſince the coming of our Saviour, will acknowledge, that things are now altered, and that magiſtrates have but a limited authority in matters of religion. It is remarkable, that the ſcripture never mentions them, when it ſpeaks of the Church and of the government of it.

3. And yet as the authority of princes and magiſtrates is derived from God, it ought ſtill to ſubſiſt entire. And therefore they have an unqueſtionable right, to take care that nothing be done in the Church, to the prejudice of their lawful authority, and of publick tranquillity; and that the miniſters of religion do not ſtretch their authority, beyond ſpiritual things. The honour and the ſafety of religion, require that this principle ſhould be laid down; for religion, as was ſaid before, ought not to diſturb ſociety, and true religion will never diſturb it. If then any Chriſtians or Church-men, under pretence of religion, ſhould break in upon the civil government and the publick peace, kings and princes have a right to reſtrain them, and then they do not oppoſe religion, but thoſe only who abuſe and diſhonour it.

After theſe conſiderations, I think any man is able to judge, whether the decay of piety and religion, is not in part to be imputed to Chriſtian princes and magiſtrates. We need but enquire whether both in civil and religious matters, they obſerve the duties I have now deſcribed. I ſay no more of this, becauſe every body is able to make the application. But I muſt add, That if the want of zeal in magiſtrates is enough to introduce confuſion and vice into the Church; the miſchief is much greater, when not only, they do not what they ought for the good of religion, but when they uſe their authority beſides, to the prejudice of it. I cannot forbear mentioning here two great abuſes.

7. The firſt is, When princes and magiſtrates aſſume the whole authority to themſelves, ſo that except preaching and adminiſtring the ſacraments, they will do every thing in the Church: when they preſume to determine articles of faith, to rule the conſcience of their ſubjects, and to force them to embrace one perſuaſion rather than another; when they will by all means take upon them to call paſtors, without regard to that right of the Church and Church-men, which is eſtabliſhed in ſcripture, and confirmed by the practice of the firſt ages of Chriſtianity; when they ſeize upon Church-eſtates, tho' there is no reaſon to fear that wealth ſhould corrupt their Clergy, and tho' ſuch revenues might be applied to ſeveral pious uſes, and particularly to the relief of Country-Churches, moſt of which are not ſufficiently edified, for want of neceſſary endowments and funds. A great deal might be ſaid about that which was done in the laſt century with relation to Church-revenues; and it were to be wiſhed, that people had been a little more ſcrupulous than they were, when they invaded the poſſeſſions of the Church, and confounded them with the revenues of the ſtate.

* See Chron. xxiii. and xxvi.

Besides this the magistrates authority is fatal to the Church, when he hinders the exercise of true discipline, and when he substitutes such regulations as he thinks fit, in the room of apostolical laws. This is one of the greatest obstructions to the restoring of apostolical discipline. Tho' the Church and her pastors should be willing to observe the ancient order, and to oppose corruption by those means which the Gospel enjoyns, yet this is not to be done, if those who have the authority in their hands will not give way to it. The Church is not in a condition to resist, and to make head against the magistrate, when he uses force; and she ought not to do it if she could.

The second abuse is, when the magistrate makes it his business to abase religion, in the persons of its ministers, by despoiling them as much as he can, of every thing that might procure them respect and authority in the Church. This policy is as contrary to the interest of religion, and to the promoting of piety, as it is common now adays, in several Christian dominions. It is well done of the magistrate to preserve his authority, and to keep the Clergy from exceeding the bounds of their calling; but from thence it does not follow, that he ought to trample them under foot, to bring them under a general contempt, and to vilify their character, which after all is sacred and venerable. This is to sacrifice religion to policy and pride, and this proceeding is a manifest cause of the contempt of religion, and of the corruption which necessarily follows that contempt, since commonly, nothing is more despised in the world, than that which great men despise.

I declare it once more, by all that has been said, I do not mean to detract any thing from the respect due to civil powers, neither do I speak of all Christian princes and magistrates, among whom there are some who have piety and zeal, and who labour with success for the good of religion. But the glory of God requires, that we should speak the truth, so that I could not but take notice of this cause of corruption. Upon the whole matter, it is to be hoped, that if Christian magistrates would be pleased to make serious reflections upon all these things, we should soon see an end of some of these disorders; and that a happier time will come when they will use their authority, to advance the honour of God, and to restore truth, piety and peace among Christians.

CAUSE V.

Education.

NOTHING is more natural than to look for the original of corruption, in the time at which it begins; I mean in the first years of life. It is not only when men have attained to a ripeness of age, that they are inclined to vice, but that inclination discovers it self from their youth. The root of that ignorance, of those prejudices, and of the greatest part of the ill dispositions they are in may be found in

in their tender years. We had need then look back upon the beginnings of life, and ſeek in youth, and in infancy it ſelf the ſource of corruption.

When we enter upon this enquiry, and conſider that men, if nothing reſtrains them, will run into vice from their youth, out of a propenſion which is common to all, we cannot but perceive at firſt ſight, that there muſt be in them a certain principle of corruption, which makes them thus prone to ill things. But if we reflect upon this matter with any attention, we may likewiſe be ſatisfied, that it would not be impoſſible to rectifie at leaſt in part, that vicious inclination, and to prevent the fatal conſequences of it by the means of education; and that it is chiefly the wrong method of educating children, which feeds that diſpoſition to evil, and which encreaſes and ſtrengthens it. This is what I intend to ſhew in this chapter. I hope to make it clearly appear, that the corruption of men, is to be imputed to the education they had in their youth; and that conſidering how children are brought up, it is impoſſible, but that ignorance and vice, muſt generally prevail in the world. I ſhall begin with general reflections, upon the education of children, and in the next place I ſhall ſpeak of their education, with a particular regard to religion and piety.

My firſt reflection is, That the world conſiſts for the moſt part of people who have no education, and whoſe unhappineſs it is to have been wholly neglected in their youth. This may particularly be obſerved among perſons of mean birth. Every body knows that ſuch kind of people, have no manner of education; that from their childhood they are abandoned to themſelves, without either inſtruction, correction, or any other help, and that living with ignorant, groſs and vicious parents, between worldly buſineſs and ill examples, they ſpend their youth almoſt like brutes.

This firſt reflection, which may be applied to many thouſand Chriſtians, diſcovers to us already a plain reaſon of the extream corruption, which appears in their manners. We wonder ſometimes that men are ſo depraved, and that great multitudes of them have almoſt no ſenſe at all, either of religion or conſcience, or of reaſon and humanity. We think it ſtrange, that there ſhould be among Chriſtians, impious perſons, blaſphemers of the name of God, thieves, poiſoners, men who defile themſelves with the moſt infamous ſins, and who make conſcience of nothing. One would think human nature were not capable of ſuch enormities; and yet they are committed by a great many. But we may eaſily apprehend how this comes to paſs, if we conſider what education thoſe perſons had. Inſtead of being brought up like Chriſtians, they have not ſo much as been educated like rational creatures. The light of nature has been extinguiſhed in them, from their very infancy, ſo that having ſcarce any notion of good or evil, they give up themſelves to vice without ſcruple or remorſe, almoſt in the ſame manner as the Heathens did of old.

II. But as this total defect of education is not univerſal, ſo we are to enquire in the ſecond place, How children are bred up, and to obſerve here the principal faults which are committed about their education.

1. The education of children is not begun ſoon enough, nothing is done to them in the firſt years of their lives. As ſoon as children begin

to have ſome kind of reaſon, the firſt principles of virtue ſhould be inſtilled into them. For tho' the ideas and actions of young children are very confuſed, yet it is in infancy that paſſions and habits begin to ſpring up. At three or four years old, children give ſome ſigns of what they are to be all their lives, and from that time it may be known, what their predominate inclinations will be. If that time was well improved, it would be an eaſy and compendious way to give children a good education. They may then without any great trouble be made to do thoſe things, which they cannot be brought to without much time and difficulty, when they are once come to fourteen or fifteen; ſome little care and gentle correction, may ſtifle a paſſion in its birth, it may cure anger and ſtubbornneſs in a child, it may ſoften his inclinations, and make him obedient and towardly. A little caution uſed about his diet, may render him ſober and temperate for his whole life. But that time which is ſo precious, is that, wherein children are moſt neglected.

This delay of education proceeds from two cauſes. 1ſt. That men have not a true notion of the education of children, and of the end to be aimed at in it. It is commonly imagined, that the breeding up of children, is the teaching them Latin, learning a trade, or ſome other things, which are uſually taught them, in order to fit them for thoſe callings to which they are deſigned. And as children are not capable of applying themſelves to arts and ſciences before a certain age, ſo their education is deferred till then. But if men did well underſtand, that the chief deſign of education, is to form the judgment and the temper of children, they would not ſtay ſo long before they took care of them. 2d.

The firſt years of children are neglected, and their conduct then is not much minded, becauſe vice does not then ſhew it ſelf in all its deformity. All that they do is then looked upon as innocent, and every thing in them appears pleaſant, not excepting their very faults. If they are too lively, or of a reſolute humour, if they happen to be in a paſſion, to lye, to ſpeak undecent and filthy words, to do little ſly naughty tricks; all this for the moſt part, makes only people laugh, commend and applaud them. It is not conſidered that thoſe are the fore-runners of vice, and that theſe beginnings call for a ſpeedy remedy. Young children are not capable of crimes: impiety, uncleanneſs, cruelty and premeditated malice, are not to be found in them, but if we narrowly obſerve them we may ſpy out the ſeeds and the buddings of thoſe vices in their actions and manners. This is not much taken notice of; paſſions and ill habits are ſuffered to grow quietly during childhood, and they are quite formed and ſettled before they are obſerved. At ſeven or eight years of age, innocency is already loſt and the heart is corrupted. People begin to think of educating their children when the fitteſt ſeaſon for education is paſt, and when they have already thoſe principles of corruption in them, which they will never ſhake off.

2. There is no care taken to form the mind and judgment of children. Reaſon being the moſt eſſential property of men, is that which ought to be chiefly cultivated in young people; and all that they are taught beſides, is of little uſe, if they are not accuſtomed to this. Great labour is uſed to learn them languages and ſciences, their memory is exerciſed, they are loaded with ſeveral inſtructions, their heads are filled with a multitude

multitude of words and ideas; but it would be without compariſon more important, to cultivate their judgment. Whatever they may be deſigned for, no greater good can be procured to them, than to make them able to paſs a ſound judgment upon things, and to govern themſelves by reaſon. True ſenſe is neceſſary at all times, and it is of a general uſefulneſs in our whole life. It is therefore an unhappineſs for children that in this reſpect they are ſo much neglected. Men have not the patience to reaſon with them, and to teach them to ſpeak and to act wiſely. They are ſuffered to be among people who can neither ſpeak nor reaſon, they converſe for the moſt part, only with ſervants or other children. By this means they accuſtom themſelves to take up falſe notions, to judge of things only by their appearances, to reſolve raſhly and without conſideration, and to be governed only by their ſenſes, paſſions, or prejudices. From thence proceed almoſt all the faults which they commit afterwards; but this is eſpecially the cauſe of that affection which men bear to ſin and to the things of this world. The firſt quality of a Chriſtian, is to be a rational man, it being impoſſible that a man who cannot make uſe of his reaſon, and who has no ſenſe, ſhould judge aright of ſpiritual things, curb his paſſions, renounce his prejudices, and conſtantly follow the rules of his duty.

3. I ſhall not here enumerate all the particular faults which are ſuffered in children; but there are two which I cannot but take notice of, becauſe I look upon them as the cauſe of moſt of the paſſions and vices, to which men are addicted. Firſt there are no ſufficient endeavours uſed to make children tractable, and to ſubject them to the will of others. The ground-work of a good education is to keep them in awe and obedience; and not to let them grow independant, and obſtinate in their own will and paſſions; ſo that when we command or forbid them a thing it is by all means neceſſary to make them obey. When we obſerve in them too ſtrong an inclination to any thing, tho' the thing were innocent, yet becauſe they deſire it too earneſtly, they are not always to be indulged in it. But care is to be taken, that when we croſs their will, we do it with mildneſs, and in ſuch a manner, as may give them to underſtand, that it is with reaſon, and for their good we oppoſe them, and not out of humour, or only to vex them. When children are thus dealt with, they may be turned which way ſoever we pleaſe. It keeps them from ſtubbornneſs and ſelf love, it teaches them to overcome their deſires, to ſubmit to corrections, and to follow the advice which is given them. In a word, tractableneſs in a child, is a diſpoſition to every thing that is good, and the foundation of all virtues. But no good can be expected from a child who is not docile and obedient. If he is permitted while young to be independant, and to do what he liſts, he will be much more abſolute when he comes to a riper age.

The other fault which it is very neceſſary to prevent, is the love of the body and of the objects of ſenſe. A carnal temper, is by the teſtimony of Scripture itſelf, the root of all vices. But the firſt riſe of that irregular affection, which men bear to every thing that gratifies their body, is in their infancy. For beſides, that children govern themſelves only by ſenſe; that byaſs they have towards ſenſible things, is forfeited by the ſenſual education, which is beſtowed upon them. None but

groſs and material objects, are propoſed to them; they are entertained only with thoſe things which affect the ſenſes, and no ideas but thoſe of bodily pleaſures or pains, are excited in them. The promiſes and threats, the rewards and puniſhments, which are uſed to gain upon them, relate only to corporeal things. And here it ought not to be omitted, that they are chiefly ſpoiled, by being indulged in gluttony, and vanity of cloaths. Theſe are the two firſt paſſions of children; the two inclinations by which they begin to grow corrupt and to love the world; nothing makes ſo much impreſſion upon them as that which affects their eyes or their palate.

If children were uſed to a ſimplicity of diet and apparel, this would preſerve them from many dangerous vices and paſſions; it would diſpoſe them for thoſe virtues which are the moſt neceſſary to a wiſe man and a Chriſtian, it would inure them to ſobriety, labour, prudence, humility, to the contempt of pleaſure, and to firmneſs and patience in calamities. This would make their conſtitution ſtronger, and prevent divers infirmities, which both afflict and ſhorten their lives. But ill cuſtom prevails againſt the maxims of reaſon and Chriſtianity. Little caution is uſed in relation to their diet; they are ſuffered to eat much beyond that which nature requires, and they are accuſtomed to be liquoriſh and dainty in their eating. As for cloaths and decking, fathers, and more eſpecially mothers, have that weakneſs, that they love to ſee their children fine and ſpruce. Beſides this, the way of breeding up children of the better ſort, makes them ſoft, effeminate and lovers of pleaſure. The fruit of ſuch an education, is, that children become ſlaves to their bodies and to their ſenſes; they are taken with nothing but bodily pleaſures and worldly things. From thence ſpring in proceſs of time, intemperance, uncleanneſs, pride, covetouſneſs, and moſt of the greater kind of ſins. This is likewiſe the principal cauſe of indevotion, and of the little reliſh which men find in ſpiritual things, particularly in religion and piety. A ſenſual education occaſions all theſe evils.

4. It will not be improper to obſerve here, That frequently the education which is given to thoſe children, who are deſtined to ſciences and conſiderable employments, either in the Church or in civil ſociety, does but corrupt their inclinations. They are ſent to colleges and univerſities, where being truſted with themſelves, they live in independence and libertiniſm; and they are ſent thither at an age, in which, without a kind of miracle, they cannot fail of being undone. They are as it were emancipated from the inſpection of their parents; they are expoſed without defence to the moſt dangerous ſeductions, and that at the very time, when they are the moſt unfit to regulate their conduct, and the moſt ſuſceptible of ill impreſſions and vicious examples. Children would be much better educated with relation both to ſciences and good manners, if their parents did not make ſo much haſte, and if they did not ſpur them on to ſtudy, till their judgment was a little formed, and eſpecially if they took care to confirm them in the principles of religion and virtue, before they were ſent from home. Some alteration ſhould likewiſe be made in colleges. For the very ſtudies which youths purſue there, are inſtrumental to debauch them. They learn Latin and obſcenity together. Authors are put into their hands, the reading of whom raiſes impure ideas

ideas in their minds; and as if there was a design to stifle in them all sense of modesty, they are made to interpret and to rehearse very undecent things. When all is well considered, young people acquire but little of useful learning in colleges and academies, at the rate they live and study in those places; and there too they commonly leave their innocency.

5. The means of procuring to children a happy education, are not used as they should be. These means are instruction, encouragement, and correction.

Instruction is very much neglected, as I shall more particularly shew, when I come to speak of the education of youth with reference to religion. Parents seldom give good directions to their children, to teach them how they ought to live. They do worse, they train them up to ill things, and give them bad instructions. By the discourse and the maxims they utter in the hearing of their children, they infuse sentiments and principles of covetousness, pride, sensuality and dissimulation into them; they teach them to act upon the motives of interest and passion, or by the notions of a false honour. Nay, they do sometimes directly teach them vice, they encourage them to lye and cheat, to be revengeful and passionate. So that young people are not only destitute of good instructions, but they are besides, infected from their infancy with several most pernicious principles. I need not say, what the consequences of such an education are like to be.

If few children are formed to virtue by instruction, few are made virtuous by the good example of their parents. It is much when this example is not bad and dangerous. In most families children see nothing that savours of Christianity, except some external acts of religion; they observe that every one of the family is employed about temporal things; the discourses they hear, turn altogether upon interest, or some trifling subject. They are witnesses of a great many disorders, of the heats and quarrels of their fathers and mothers, of their avarice, their swearing, their lying, their intemperance, their impiety, and their want of respect for religion. These are the examples, which for the most part, children have before their eyes, and which corrupt them more than any thing else. At that age almost every thing is done by imitation and example; and no example makes more impression upon them, than the example of their parents, because it is always in sight; and they think besides they cannot do amiss, as long as they copy after it.

It is very useful in educating children to encourage them. I mean not only that they should be exhorted and incited to their duty, and that, from the motives of honour and from the pleasure that attends the doing of it; but that likewise, we should express our satisfaction, and our love and esteem of them, when they do as we would have them. A word of praise, a little reward, inspires new ardor into them. We may do what we please with children, when we can prevail upon them with gentle methods, and win their love: they then accustom themselves betimes to do their duty, out of inclination, and from noble and generous views. But to use always severity towards children, and to take no notice of their endeavours to do well, is the way to discourage them, and to extinguish in them the love of virtue.

Yet

Yet ſeverity is neceſſary, and upon ſome occaſions we ought not to forbear rigour and correction. Thoſe indulgent parents, who being reſtrained by a falſe tenderneſs, cannot find in their heart to chaſtiſe their children, do infallibly ruin them. But if the want of correction and diſcipline makes children unruly; chaſtiſement ill diſpens'd produces the ſame effect. There are commonly three faults committed in the correcting of children.

The firſt relates to the cauſe for which they are chaſtiſed. Correction ſhould not be uſed but for thoſe faults, which have ſomething of vice in them; as when children are guilty of malice, of ſome ill habit, or of great negligence; and even then we ſhould not proceed to chaſtiſement, but after we have tried other ways to no purpoſe. But this rule is little obſerv'd. Children are puniſh'd for all ſorts of faults indifferently, and very often for ſmall ones. They will ſometimes be ſeverely chaſtiſed becauſe they cannot ſay their leſſon without book, or for ſome other little diſorder they have done in the houſe through imprudence and without malice; and at the ſame time faults againſt piety and good manners ſhall be paſſed over. Theſe corrections produce ſeveral ill effects, and eſpecially this, That children form to themſelves falſe notions of their duty. They fancy that the faults for which they are puniſh'd are the moſt conſiderable, and that there is more hurt in ſpoiling their cloaths, or in miſſing a word of their leſſon, than in lying, or in praying without attention, which leſſens in them the abhorrence of vice.

The ſecond error, which relates to the nature of the correction inflicted upon children is, when no other chaſtiſements are uſed but thoſe which make the body ſmart. Such corrections without doubt are uſeful and neceſſary, becauſe children are chiefly moved by thoſe things which ſtrike the ſenſes; but they are not the only ones to which recourſe is to be had. To beat children every time they do amiſs, is to uſe them like beaſts. There are other ways of puniſhing and mortifying them. The moſt profitable corrections are thoſe, which excite in them ſorrow and ſhame for the ill they have done.

Laſtly, There is an error in the chaſtiſing of children, when they are not corrected with diſcretion and gentleneſs. Prudence and even juſtice requires, that regard ſhould be had to the nature of their fault, to the diſpoſition they are in, and to other circumſtances; and it becomes that love which a father owes his children, to correct them with lenity and moderation, and to forbear exceſſive ſeverities. Children ſhould perceive the tenderneſs of their parents even in their corrections, and be made ſenſible that it is with reluctancy, and only in order to their good, that they treat them with ſome rigour. If chaſtiſements were diſpenſed with theſe cautions, they would at the ſame time that they cauſe pain, beget in children's minds a ſorrow for having done amiſs, and that would make them love their parents, even while they are puniſhing them. But for the moſt part, parents, or thoſe who have an authority over children, chaſtiſe them without diſcretion, and with a rigour which borders upon cruelty: they puniſh them rather out of paſſion, ſpite or revenge, than upon wiſe and ſober conſideration. Such a proceeding diſcourages and provokes children, and it makes them hate their duty. I confeſs this method may ſtrike terror into them, and curb them a little, but they grow

grow the more ſtout and incorrigible by it, and they will certainly run into licentiouſneſs, as ſoon as they are no longer reſtrain'd by the fear of puniſhment.

From what has been ſaid hitherto, it is plain, that men's corruption is a conſequence of the education they had in their youth: but this will yet more evidently appear by the reflections I am now going to make, upon the way of bringing up children in religion and piety.

We are here to conſider education, in reference to the two ends of it, which are the educating of youth, firſt in the knowledge, and then in the practice of religion.

I. The conſiderations to be inſiſted on concerning the firſt head, relate either to the things which children are to be inſtructed in, or to the manner of inſtructing them.

1. As to the things themſelves, there are two articles upon which the inſtruction of youth ought to depend; and thoſe are the truths and the duties of religion.

The chief rule to be obſerv'd with relation to the truths of religion, is to inſiſt upon thoſe which are the moſt neceſſary, and to give a diſtinct notion of them to children. And here two faults are committed; the firſt is, when they are not inſtructed in all the truths which are to be known in order to be a Chriſtian; the ſecond is, when ſuch inſtructions are propos'd to them as are unſuitable to their age, or even uſeleſs.

To explain my meaning a little further; I ſay firſt, That there are ſome eſſential things, which children are not at all, or but imperfectly taught. Among theſe we may reckon the knowledge of ſacred hiſtory. Religion being founded upon hiſtory and facts, it would be requiſite that inſtruction ſhould begin at the hiſtorical part of religion, and at the main events which are related both in the Old and New Teſtament: ſo that children might know at leaſt in general the principal ages of the world, and the moſt remarkable things, which did happen from the Creation to the coming of our Saviour; what the Flood was, what were the Egyptian and Babyloniſh Captivities; what time *Moſes*, *David*, the Patriarchs and the Prophets lived in; what ſort of people the Heathens and the Jews were, and what kind of life our Saviour led.

It muſt not be ſaid, that hiſtory is above the capacity of children; for on the contrary, it is that, which is to them the eaſieſt part of religion, which they hearken to with the greateſt pleaſure, and which they remember beſt. Nothing does more ſmoothly enter into their minds than hiſtory: all the things I have now mention'd may be taught them in a week. And this knowledge is as neceſſary as it is eaſily acquired. A man can never underſtand his religion well, or be thoroughly convinced of its truth, if he does not know the facts which it ſuppoſes. We ſee that it was by the means of hiſtory that God choſe to inſtruct mankind, and that matters of fact make up the moſt conſiderable part of the ſacred writings. And therefore it is a ſtrange thing, that in catechiſms and other inſtructions given to youth, hiſtory ſhould be ſo little inſiſted upon. This is viſibly one of the cauſes of that profound ignorance, which the greateſt part of Chriſtians live in: this is the reaſon why they underſtand almoſt nothing of what they read or hear in ſermons, and why the doctrines which they are taught make ſo little impreſſion upon them.

Teaching

Teaching children hiſtory, gives them beforehand, ſome notions of the truths and doctrines of Chriſtianity; but yet theſe truths and doctrines ought to be propoſed to them ſeparately, that they may have a more diſtinct apprehenſion of them. Above all things great care ſhould be taken, to imprint upon the minds of thoſe who are to be inſtructed: the knowledge and the belief of the principles of Chriſtianity. But this likewiſe is not done as it ſhould be. In catechiſms, as well as in ſermons, particular truths are dwelt upon, and the general ones are touched only by the by. This is a fault I have obſerv'd in the very beginning of this work.

Now at the ſame time that children are ſuffer'd to be ignorant about many important articles, they are perplex'd with divers uſeleſs, or not very neceſſary inſtructions. Inſtead of limiting them to the eſſential parts of religion, their minds and memories are fill'd up with many things which they may ſafely be ignorant of. Some would have them underſtand the diſputes of divines, concerning the moſt curious and abſtruſe queſtions, and they are made to get ſeveral things by heart, which they do not underſtand, and which are of no great uſe. In the mean time children learn theſe things and ſay them without book, and being poſſeſſed with the conceit, that they are as many articles of faith, they rank among divine truths ſchool-terms and doctrines, of which they neither apprehend the certainty nor the uſe. And thus having none but intricate ideas about religion: they do not perceive the beauty, the ſolidity, or the excellence of it, and they have neither true love nor reſpect for it:

When children are once inſtructed in the truths of Chriſtianity, it is particularly neceſſary to acquaint them with the duties of it. There are two diſtinct ſorts of duties in religion. Firſt the duties concerning divine worſhip or ſervice: and then the duties of morality. The firſt are adoration, the honour which is paid to God, prayer and thankſgiving: but as theſe duties may be perform'd either outwardly or inwardly, it is of very great moment to make children apprehend, That prayer and all other acts of divine worſhip, ought to proceed from the heart, that * *God will be ſerved in ſpirit and in truth*, and that without this the worſhip which is paid to him, either in private or in publick, does only provoke his diſpleaſure. It is not enough therefore, to tell children, That they muſt pray to God or go to Church, and to teach them ſome forms of prayer to be ſaid at certain times and hours: all this is but external, and if we go no farther, if we do not carefully inform them, that true worſhip is internal and ſpiritual, we ſhall make but hypocrites of them, by teaching them to pray and to perform religious acts. The faults then which are committed in this point, are of great moment, and we may eaſily perceive, that hypocriſy and indevotion are the conſequences of this negligence. The religion of moſt Chriſtians conſiſts only in ſome external actions; they think they have fulfilled their duty when they have recited ſome prayers, or been preſent at the publick worſhip of God, tho' in all they do of this kind, they have neither attention nor elevation of heart; but this error which is ſo capital, and yet ſo common, ariſes chiefly

* John iv. 23.

chiefly from hence, that children are formed only to a meer outſide devotion and worſhip.

Young people are not much better inſtructed in moral duties. I ſhall not enter here upon all the conſiderations which the ſubject might afford, becauſe I have treated of the want of inſtruction concerning morals in ſeveral places of this treatiſe, and particularly in the I. Chapter of the firſt Part. Yet I muſt ſay, that this defect proceeds from the inſtructions which are given to youth. Much greater care is taken to inform them about the doctrines than about the duties of Chriſtianity. The articles of the Creed, the queſtions concerning the ſacraments, and the other points of doctrine, are handled and examined largely enough in Catechiſms, and controverſy is not forgot; but the Ten Commandments are explained in ſo ſuccinct and ſuperficial a manner, that we do not find there ſo much as the names of a great many vices, virtues and duties. Children who ſhould be raiſed up to Chriſtian perfection, are only taught the Ten Commandments, and from the explication which is given to theſe, they gather that they ſhould not be idolaters, blaſphemers or profane perſons, that they ſhould neither commit murder nor adultery, that they ſhould not ſteal or bear falſe witneſs. But how many other duties are there of which they have no manner of notion? They are not taught what it is to be gentle, humble, ſincere, charitable, pure, ſober and patient. Many perſons becauſe they were never inſtructed in theſe virtues which are the principal ornaments of a Chriſtian, do not practiſe or ſo much as know them. We are to impute to theſe ſlight and defective inſtructions, that opinion which is commonly received, That whoſoever is free from thoſe ſix or ſeven great ſins forbidden in the decalogue, is a good man.

2. The ſucceſs of inſtructions depends in the ſecond place upon the method and way of teaching. The method of teaching, ſhould on the one hand be clear and proportioned to the age and capacity of children, and on the other, it ſhould be delightful, and fit to make them love religion. By this, two ends which ought to be aimed at, will be attained; the mind will be enlightened, and the heart moved. What is clear informeth the mind, and what is delightful wins the heart, and inſpires into it a ſtrong affection for religion and for the duties of it.

1. Perſpicuity is never more neceſſary, than it is in the inſtructing of youth. Children having no ideas as yet of moſt things, and not being uſed to the ſignification of words, cannot underſtand what is ſaid to them, unleſs it be delivered with much clearneſs and ſimplicity, and unleſs every thing be avoided, which may puzzle or ſeem obſcure to them. This perſpicuity reſults firſt, from the things that are taught. It is a certain truth, that whatſoever is eſſential in religion, is always clear and eaſie to be underſtood; and that on the contrary, whatſoever is obſcure and difficult, is not very neceſſary. So that provided inſtruction goes no further than eſſential doctrines and duties, it cannot be very hard for children, to apprehend what is ſaid to them. Secondly, Clear expreſſions, and plain and popular ways of ſpeaking, produce diſtinct ideas in the minds of thoſe who are inſtructed; but a dark or too high a ſtile, figurative or learned phraſes, ſpoil the fruit of inſtructions. Laſtly, order and method contribute mightily to clearneſs. It is not fit that children

dren should be loaded at first, with many doctrines and precepts. General instructions, the principles of religion, and the simplest ideas, ought to go foremost, and then particular instructions and more complex ideas, may be proposed; but still with a due regard to the age, capacity, and progress, of children.

2. Instruction is to be delivered in a delightful manner. This is the way to insinuate ourselves into the minds of children. Nothing wins more upon them, than a sweet and pleasant way of speaking, and nothing gives them so much disgust, as roughness and severity. If religion was represented to them with an attractive aspect, they would certainly embrace it with eagerness. But for the most part those who teach or speak to them of religion, do it with an air of severity, and a dismal tone, and with those circumstances, which make them averse to it. Commands, threatnings, and constraint are used, to make them take their Catechisms or say their prayers; if they fail to do this, their teachers are angry and beat them. When we exhort them to piety, instead of going about this with such a gentleness as might make virtue amiable to them, we speak in a harsh and chiding manner. The effect of this is, that children seeing nothing in religion that is inticing, take up a prejudice against it; they look upon that instruction, to which they are compelled, as a hard piece of labour and drudgery. Religion is no sooner mentioned, but it damps their good humour, they do nothing but by constraint and against their will; they free themselves from that constraint as soon as they can, and they bear during their whole life an aversion, or at least, an indifference to religion.

II. I have been discoursing hitherto, of what relates to the knowledge of religion, and I hope I have clearly proved, that generally speaking, children are ill instructed. I am now to consider education with relation to practice. For it would be to no purpose, to infuse into young people a perfect knowledge of the truths and duties of religion, if they were not taught to make a good use of that knowledge, and to direct it to its true end, which is the practice of virtue and piety. But it is seldom that the care of parents, and of those who have the instructing of children, goes so far. If they take some care about their instruction, they generally neglect them as to the practical part, and they little enquire whether they live according to the precepts of religion. Now instructions thus dispensed, do not only prove useless, but they may likewise make children doubly wicked, and fill them with the most dangerous prejudices. When children observe that religion is proposed to them only, in an historical and speculative manner, and that provided they remember what is told them, and are able to give an account of it they are commended for being well skilled in religion; and that as for the rest, they are permitted to live as they please, and that they are no child, tho' they do not practise what they were taught; they conclude from all this, that religion consists wholly, in the knowledge and profession of certain truths, and that it is not absolutely necessary to frame their lives according to the rules of the Gospel. They accustom themselves besides to slight their knowledge, and to act against the principles of their own consciences. These pernicious sentiments are infused into children

children, when inſtructions are not directed to practice. To prevent ſo great an evil, theſe rules are to be obſerved.

1. The deſign of propoſing the truths and doctrines of Chriſtianity to children, ſhould be to beget in them a love and a reſpect for them; and in order to that, we ſhould let them ſee, their certainty, their importance, and their uſe. It ought then to be carefully inculcated to them, that there is nothing more true and certain, nothing of greater importance, or that concerns us nearer than religion, and that in compariſon with it, all that we ſee in the world, is of very little or no conſequence; and laſtly, that it was revealed for no other end, but to make us good, and to conduct us to the higheſt bleſſedneſs. By this method, inſtruction will always terminate in practice. By teaching children to know God, we ſhall excite in them a love and reverence towards that Supreme Being. By ſpeaking to them of Providence, we ſhall make them apprehend that God ſees every thing, and what reaſon we have to depend upon, and to fear him. By telling them the hiſtory of the Bible, we ſhall make them obſerve in thoſe various events, the effects of God's wiſdom, of his goodneſs, power and juſtice. In explaining to them the doctrine of the ſacraments, we ſhall chiefly apply our ſelves to make them underſtand, what theſe ſacred ceremonies oblige Chriſtians to, what an auguſt and venerable thing baptiſm is, and what purity is required in thoſe who are baptized: and ſo when we ſpeak to children of Chriſt and his ſufferings, of the reſurrection and a future judgment, of the puniſhments and rewards of another life, and of all the other truths, we ſhould do it in ſuch a manner, as may ſtir them up to piety and holineſs.

2. In the next place we ought to engage children to the practice and obſervation of the duties of Chriſtianity, with relation both to worſhip and manners. And firſt it is altogether neceſſary, to teach them to render to God the worſhip that is due to him. There are few Chriſtian families, where ſomething is not done with this intention. Children are made to learn ſome prayers, to ſay them mornings and evenings, and to be preſent at the publick and private exerciſes of piety. But the main ſhould be, to bring them to ſincerity in divine-ſervice, leſt they fall into impiety and hypocriſy. The greateſt endeavour ſhould be, to accuſtom them to pray with attention and reverence. This may at firſt ſeem difficult; we neither ſee the heart of children, nor can regulate the motions of it. But yet I think, there are ways to fix their minds, which might be ſucceſsfully uſed: and I hope my readers will not think it amiſs if I dwell a little upon this head, conſidering the importance of it.

1. I would not have children pray, before they have ſome knowledge of what they are doing. There is a cuſtom eſtabliſhed every where, which I look upon as the firſt cauſe of indevotion; and that is, to make little children recite prayers, and long ones too. I do not apprehend the uſe of this, nor where the inconvenience would be, if children did not pray at an age when they can hardly ſpeak an articulate word. It would be time enough to make them pray, when they are capable of ſome reflection. If we did wait till then they might pray with attention; and, I make no doubt, but that they would do it with pleaſure and reverence.

Children think it an honour to do what is done by men; if therefore they were not permitted to pray till they came to a certain age, they would look upon praying as a particular privilege. But when they are made to pray before they have any ſenſe of what they do, it puts this notion into their heads, that praying is nothing elſe but reciting of prayers: and beſides, that obligation which is laid upon them, to perform regularly a duty, of which they do not yet underſtand the neceſſity of the uſe, makes that they only obſerve it out of cuſtom.

2. I could wiſh that when we begin to make children pray, we ſhould teach them plain and ſhort prayers, wherein they might ſay nothing but what they underſtood. Two or three ſentences are enough in thoſe beginnings, and as they grow in years, longer prayers may be preſcribed them. Brevity is to every body a help to devotion; but children being not capable of a long attention, it is certain that long prayers are not at all fit for them.

3. It would be very uſeful to diſcourſe with them about the excellency and the neceſſity of prayer, and to make them apprehend what an honour it is for us, to ſpeak to God and to lay open our neceſſities before him.

4. In order to accuſtom children to look upon prayer with reverence, and to go about it with ſerioufneſs; they ſhould not be allowed to pray when they are ſtrongly poſſeſſed with ſome paſſion, or object, or when they have committed a conſiderable fault againſt piety.

5. It is particularly neceſſary to regulate and obſerve their behaviour and looks, while they are at prayers, and then likewiſe to expreſs a reverence our ſelves, and to ſay or do nothing that may give them any diſtraction. It is a cuſtom as bad, as it is ordinary in families, to go to and fro, to be buſy and to talk all the while that children are ſaying their prayers. How is it poſſible that amidſt all that noiſe, which would even hinder older people to pray as they ought, children, whoſe thoughts are ſo rambling, ſhould not be diſtracted? And what reverence can be expected from them about the exerciſes of piety, when their fathers and mothers who are preſent ſhew none at all? This is what I have to obſerve, concerning prayer, which is the principal part of divine worſhip.

As to what concerns the duties of morality, very particular care ought to be taken, to make children obſerve them. The firſt mean to be uſed next to inſtruction, is to exhort them to the practice of virtue, and to repreſent to them, that piety and holineſs are the eſſential characters of a Chriſtian. But the exhortations directed to them will have no great effect, if they are not diſpenſed with prudence. Sometimes parents ſpoil all, tho' they mean well. They exhort and chide at every turn, they are perpetually admoniſhing and moralizing: by this they give a diſguſt to their children, inſtead of winning upon them. Exhortations ought to be accompained with diſcretion and gentleneſs; above all, we ſhould endeavour to perſuade and to prevail upon children by reaſon, that ſo being convinced in their own hearts of the juſtice, beauty, and uſefulneſs of virtue, they might practiſe it of their own accord, out of inclination and with pleaſure.

That we may be able to exhort children as is fitting, it is requiſite to be well acquainted with their temper, and to obſerve which are their predominant inclinations; that if thoſe inclinations are good, they may be cultivated,

cultivated, and if bad corrected. And it is eaſy to know the temper of children, becauſe they deal ingenuouſly, and have not yet learned the art of diſſembling. If men did make this their ſtudy, if they did take hold of the good diſpoſition which may be in children, if they did apply themſelves to oppoſe the predominant faults, to which either their age or their conſtitution inclines them; they would preſerve them from many vices, and make them great proficients in virtue.

Beſides this, parents either by themſelves or others, ought to watch over the conduct of their children, and to enquire ſtrictly, whether they practiſe the leſſons which are given them, whether they are afraid of doing ill things, whether they forbear thoſe faults for which they have been reprov'd, whether they reſiſt thoſe vicious inclinations, whether they are gentle, ſober, humble and moderate in their diſcourſes, actions, and behaviour. To this end, it is very proper, that they ſhould not have too much liberty, and that they ſhould be for the moſt part under the eye of ſome wiſe perſons, who may obſerve their deportment. I do not enlarge upon theſe conſiderations, becauſe they would carry me too far; neither do I ſpeak here of encouragement, correction, and example, nor of ſome other means which might be very uſefully taken in hand for regulating the conduct of children, becauſe theſe have been ſpoken to already.

There is ground enough to conclude from what has been ſaid, that corruption proceeds primarily and chiefly from the ill education of youth. The ordinary education of children being not Chriſtian, what wonder is it, that true Chriſtianity and ſolid virtue ſhould be ſo ſcarce? The firſt impreſſions are the ſtrongeſt. The principles which have been imbibed in the firſt years of life, do not wear out afterwards; and thoſe who had not a good education, are not often known to be wiſe and regular in their conduct.

Let it not be objected here, what many are wont to alledge upon this ſubject, That the errors of education are not ſo conſiderable, but that they may be corrected afterwards, and that wiſdom comes with years. Thus thoſe men reaſon who only examine things ſuperficially; but ſuch perſons did never ſeriouſly reflect upon man's temper, upon the manner how ill habits are formed, or upon experience. Almoſt all good or ill habits begin in infancy, and they grow ſtronger afterwards. The age which ſucceeds youth is ſo far from ſupplying the defects of education, that on the contrary, the longer a man lives, the more difficult it is for him to return to virtue, if he did not ſet out well at firſt. For beſides, that habits are then ſtronger and deeper rooted, buſineſs does alſo come with age, and people have no longer that leiſure and freedom, which they had when they were young. Thoſe therefore who do not take right meaſures early, and who launch into the world with ill principles, are ſtill growing worſe inſtead of amending. This is verified by daily experience. Age ſeldom alters men for the better.

I do not deny, but that people who were neglected in their infancy, or whoſe youth has been unruly, are ſometimes known to change their manners and their conduct, when they come to a riper age. But we are to conſider how this change happens, and what the nature of it is. In ſome it is a thorough change and a ſincere return to virtue. God

ſometimes works converſion in the greateſt ſinners; and he does this commonly by afflictions, ſickneſſes and pains. But ſuch kinds of converſion are not very frequent. The change which we think we obſerve both in our ſelves and others, is not always ſincere; it is often no more than an effect of age, of the ſtate we are in, or of cuſtom.

Age does two things, it deadens the paſſions, and it changes them. In the heat of youth paſſions are violent, and make a great ſtir; when the prime of life is over, a man perhaps is no longer a libertine or a deboſhee; but his exterior only is reformed. The ſame principle of corruption remains in his heart. He that was ſenſual and given to lewdneſs, moderates himſelf; but ſtill his heart and his imaginations are defiled. He that was profane and impious, does no longer profeſs libertiniſm openly, he practiſes ſome duties of religion. But for all that, he has no more devotion, or faith then before. Age does likewiſe change men's paſſions and inclinations. Young people have their paſſions, and ſuppoſing theſe ſhould abate about forty or fifty, or even that they ſhould be quite left off, which yet happens but ſeldom; there are other paſſions which ſucceed thoſe of youth, and which work the ſtronger, becauſe they are not ſo much miſtruſted, and becauſe they make leſs noiſe, and are hid under the pretence of a lawful calling. Thus we ſee often that libertines and deboſhees, end with ambition and covetouſneſs. The world calls the change which is obſerved in thoſe men, converſion and amendment. A man is ſaid to be reclaimed from the errors of his younger days, when his conduct is no longer ſcandalous, or manifeſtly criminal; but if he is free from the faults of his youth, he is guilty of others, which he had not then. He is no longer diſſolute, but he is a ſlave to ambition, he is covetous, unjuſt, and wedded to the world, more than ever. Nay, all things well conſidered, he is worſe than he was in his youth; ſince he has run from one vice into another, and loaded himſelf with the ſins of the ſeveral ſtages of life. We are not to imagine, that every alteration which age makes in men's conduct and manners is a true converſion.

The various ſtates, callings, and profeſſions of men, do likewiſe put many of them upon altering their way of living and make them give over thoſe exceſſes to which they have been addicted for ſome time. As ſoon as a man comes to be the maſter of a family, or to be preferred to places, he muſt of neceſſity grow more regular in his conduct, and forſake ſeveral diſorders which he allowed himſelf in before. He becomes more ſerious, he applies himſelf cloſer to labour, he lives more retired, and he takes leave of the amuſements of youth. Honour, decency, intereſt, the neceſſity of making a family, and other conſiderations, oblige him to this; but religion has not always a ſhare in this change.

Laſtly, a habit of ſinning does often blind and harden men to that degree, that they imagine, there is a ſincere amendment in them, when there is none at all; nay, when they are more corrupt than when they were young. Men at firſt are ſenſible of their faults, conſcience checks them for the ſins they commit; but in proceſs of time they perceive them no more; conſcience grows ſeared, and they ſin without being aware of it. Habits ſeldom fail to produce this effect, of which we ſee a thouſand inſtances in old ſinners.

All

All this ſhews, that the foundations of the conduct of our whole lives are laid in youth, and that the chief reaſon why men live ill, is becauſe they have not been well educated.

I do not think it neceſſary to mention the remedies of this Cauſe of Corruption: I have obſerved them all along, in ſhewing the faults which are committed in the education of youth: I ſhall only add, before I diſmiſs the ſubject, that all this does properly concern maſters of families and paſtors.

It were therefore to be wiſhed, in the firſt place, that parents would take more care than they do, to breed their children well, and that in this they would proceed by the rules which reaſon and religion preſcribe. They are miſtaken if they think they may excuſe themſelves from this obligation, which both nature and piety lay upon them, and which cannot be neglected without a ſin. But the careleſneſs of parents in this point, may very juſtly be wondered at; the education of their children is generally that of all things which they mind the leaſt, and the reaſon of it is, that they themſelves want religion and piety.

It would be requiſite in the next place, that paſtors ſhould diſcharge their duty with relation to young people, and that to this end in all places and Churches, the neceſſary order and method were eſtabliſhed for inſtructing the people, and particularly children. I remark this, becauſe in this reſpect things are not well ordered, ſo that in many places ſuch helps and means are very much wanting. It is well known, that the opportunities of inſtruction and the helps to piety are mighty ſcarce in the country and in villages. Schools are there managed at a very ordinary rate, and many places have no ſchool at all, whereby it happens that many perſons cannot ſo much as read. There likewiſe, divine ſervice is but ſeldom performed, and very careleſsly too. The miniſters who are appointed in thoſe places, are generally either men of little worth, or men who do not watch over their flocks as they ought, and who are remiſs in the exerciſe of their office. Theſe are the eſſential defects which ſhould be remedied, by thoſe who have authority in Church or ſtate.

Above all, it is requiſite that Church-men ſhould have a ſtrict inſpection over ſchools and families, and that catechiſings were more frequent than they are. Young people ought to be the chief objects of the care of paſtors; no part of their office is more uſeful, or rewards their labours with better ſucceſs than that. Their endeavours to mend thoſe who are come to age, are for the moſt part to little purpoſe, but what they do for children is of great benefit. If therefore they have a zeal for the Glory of God, and if they wiſh to ſee a change in the face o the Church, let them apply themſelves to the inſtructing of youth, and make it their buſineſs to form a new generation.

Among the particular eſtabliſhments which might be made, for the edification of the Church, and the benefit of young people, there is one which would be of great uſe, and which ſeems to be abſolutely neceſſary. And that is, that with relation to children, who have attained the age of diſcretion, the ſame order ſhould be obſerved for their admiſſion to the ſacrament, which was practiſed in the primitive Church, when catechumens were to be received into the Church by baptiſm. This admiſſion

miſſion was very ſolemn. A long probation and inſtruction went before it. The catechumens were required to give an account of their faith, and they bound themſelves by ſolemn promiſes and vows, to renounce the world and to live holy. No ſuch thing is done at this day in the adminiſtration of baptiſm, becauſe young children are baptized; but what is not done at the time of baptiſm, ſhould be done when they come to years of diſcretion. And truly if there be not a publick and ſolemn profeſſion, a promiſe in due form on the children's part, I do not ſee how we can well anſwer what is objected by ſome againſt infant-baptiſm, which yet is a good and laudable practice. A man cannot be obliged to profeſs the Chriſtian religion, againſt his will or without his knowledge: this engagement is a perſonal thing, in which every body ſhould act and anſwer for himſelf. When children are baptized, they know nothing of what is done to them; it is therefore abſolutely neceſſary that when they come to the years of reaſon, they ſhould ratify and confirm, the engagements they came under by their baptiſm, and that they ſhould become members of the Church out of knowledge and choice. Now the fitteſt time for ſuch a confirmation and promiſe, is when they are admitted to the participation of the holy ſacrament.

The order then which I mean is this: firſt that when children deſire to be admitted to the ſacrament, they ſhould be inſtructed for ſome weeks before, and that at the ſame time they ſhould be informed of the ſacredneſs and importance of this action, and of the promiſe they are to make, that ſo they might prepare for it betimes. In the next place, that they ſhould be examined, and that they ſhould publicly render an account of their faith. This examination being over, that they ſhould be required, to renew and confirm in a public and ſolemn manner their baptiſmal vow, to renounce the devil and his works, the world and the pomp of it, the fleſh and its luſts, and to promiſe that they will live and die in the Chriſtian faith; and then that they ſhould be admitted to the communion by benediction and prayers.

It will, no doubt, ſeem to ſome, that I am here propoſing a novelty, and that too not very neceſſary; that there is no occaſion for all this ſolemnity; that it is enough to examine and exhort children in private, and that this confirmation of the baptiſmal vow is included and ſuppoſed in the admiſſion to the ſacrament. To this I ſay, that the order I propoſe will be thought a novelty by none but ſuch as do not know what was anciently practiſed, and who call innovation every thing, which does not agree with the cuſtom of their country or their Church. This is an imitation of the ancient and the apoſtolical order; and beſides, this eſtabliſhment being altogether ſuitable to the nature of the Chriſtian religion, as I have juſt now made it appear, it ought not to be rejected.

As for what is ſaid, that it is ſufficient if children are examined and admitted in private: I anſwer, that the corruption of the age we live in is ſo great, that in many Churches this admiſſion, and the examination which precedes it, is but three or four hours work, and ſometimes leſs. Paſtors and thoſe to whom this function is committed, do often go about it very negligently; they content themſelves with ſome queſtions, which for the moſt part relate only to doctrine and controverſy; they addreſs to children general exhortations to piety, but they take no care to inſtruct

inſtruct them in morals, or to examine their conduct; they do not require of them an expreſs ratification of the baptiſmal vow. I know there are paſtors who do their duty, but the beſt thing would be, to have this form of examination and admiſſion regulated in ſuch a manner, that it might not be in the breaſt of every miniſter to do in this matter as he thinks fit. And that all this might be done the more orderly, it would be fitting that according to the practice of the primitive Church, ſome perſons ſhould be appointed on purpoſe to inſtruct young people and catechumens. What care ſoever may be taken of children, and whatever may be done for them in private inſtructions, it is certain, that publick and ſolemn exhortations on the one hand, and promiſes on the other, would make a much greater impreſſion upon them. They would then look upon their admiſſion with reſpect, they would remember it all their lives, and this ſolemnity would prove as uſeful and edifying to the whole Church as it would be to young people. I offer this with the greater confidence, becauſe an order like this has been ſettled of late in ſome Churches, and is there obſerved with extraordinary ſucceſs.

CAUSE VI.

Example and Cuſtom.

THERE is no doubt to be made, but that birth, education, and imitation, are three general principles of the irregularities of men's conduct. The ſtate in which they are born gives them a byaſs towards vice. Education, as has been ſhewn in the foregoing chapter, cheriſhes and maintains in moſt men that vicious inclination: but cuſtom and example give the finiſhing ſtroke to men's corruption, and make vice reign in the world with a ſovereign ſway. This third principle is ſo general and ſo powerful, that ſome have thought it the chief cauſe of corruption, and that we cannot better explain how ſin is propagated and tranſmitted from the parents to the children, than by ſaying, that this happens through imitation. And indeed it cannot be denied, but that men are particularly drawn into evil by example and cuſtom. If this be not the primary or the only ſpring of corruption, it is at leaſt one of the principal ſources of it. And therefore I thought it proper to conſider this matter here with ſome attention.

All that I am to ſay in this chapter is founded upon theſe two ſuppoſitions. 1. I ſuppoſe that men love to act by imitation, and that example is one of thoſe things which have the greateſt force upon their minds. But when the example is general, and ſupported by cuſtom and multitude, they are yet more inclined to follow it. They not only conform to cuſtom, but they think it beſides juſt and lawful to do ſo. General uſe is to them inſtead of a law, by which they judge of what is innocent and forbidden. And that which doth yet more forcibly determine them to follow example and the greater numbers, is, that they think it a diſgrace to do

otherwiſe. So that the fear of contempt added to their inclination makes them perfect ſlaves to cuſtom. If ſome remnant of knowledge and conſcience does not ſuffer them to imagine that there is no hurt in complying in all things with cuſtom, however they comfort themſelves with the thought that the evil they do is not very great, and that if they are not innocent, they are excuſable at leaſt, when they can plead example and common practice in their own behalf.

I ſuppoſe 2dly, That example and cuſtom are bad for the moſt part. This I think needs not be proved; and if it did, this whole treatiſe might afford us ſufficient proofs of it, ſince ignorance, prejudices, falſe maxims, and all the other cauſes of corruption I have mentioned, are ſo many diſpoſitions, ſentiments and practices, which are grown cuſtomary, and are eſtabliſhed by the moſt general uſe.

But it is not ſo needful to prove that the multitude of ill examples is very great, and that cuſtom is generally vicious, as it is to ſhew that under the ſhelter of example and cuſtom, corruption is ſtill ſpreading farther in the world and in the Church.

In order to this, I ſhall conſider the power of cuſtom and example, in theſe three reſpects. With relation, 1. To matters of faith. 2dly. To the order of the Church. And, 3dly. To manners. What I am to ſay upon theſe three heads will diſcover the ſource of thoſe three great imperfections which are obſerved in the Chriſtian Church, I mean error, want of order, and the bad life of Chriſtians.

1. Matters of faith ſhould not be ſubjected to the tyranny of cuſtom. Religion does not depend upon men's fancies and opinions: the truths of it are eternal truths, it is founded upon an immutable principle, and it is not more liable to change than God who is the author of it. And yet we ſee but too frequently, that in religion as well as in worldly affairs, example is more prevalent than either reaſon, juſtice or truth. Men do ſcarce ever examine things in their own nature, but cuſtom is the rule of their faith and ſentiments; by this rule they determine what is true or falſe, what they are to believe or to reject. And this prejudice is ſo ſtrong and men have carried it ſo far, that multitude and cuſtom, are looked upon as a proof and character whereby Chriſtians are to diſtinguiſh truth from error, and to judge what ſide they are to chuſe in matters of religion.

What is the reaſon why ſo many people do not perceive, that certain doctrines are palpable errors, and monſtrous tenets? We wonder how it is poſſible in ſo learned and refined an age as this is, that the groſſeſt fables and extravagances ſhould ſtill go down with men of parts, for divine truths and adorable myſteries. A time will come, when poſterity will hardly believe, that ever ſuch opinions were received, or that ever men did in earneſt diſpute for or againſt ſuch or ſuch a tenet. It is only the prejudice of example and multitude, which do blind men at this day: they have been nurs'd up and educated in thoſe perſuaſions, they ſee them obtaining among numerous ſocieties, and that is the occaſion of their obſtinacy in error.

Nothing but this inclination of men to follow cuſtom, keeps up in the Church thoſe diſputes which rend it into ſo many different ſects. The principle and deſign of moſt diſputes is no other but that men will main-

ain, at any rate, the ſentiments of their party; and by this means thoſe who are in error, inſtead of being undeceiv'd, are more and more confirm'd in it. Every body ſwallows without chewing, all that is profeſt in the ſociety or communion in which he lives, and condemns without examination the opinions which are maintained by ſmall numbers or by perſons of another country or ſociety. Thoſe who are prepoſſeſſed do not ſo much as make it a queſtion, whether they may not be miſtaken, and whether the truth may not be on the other ſide. It is to no purpoſe to alledge to ſuch people the moſt invincible reaſons, to preſs them with expreſs declarations of Scripture, or with unanſwerable objections; for either they do not attend to all this, or if they examine thoſe reaſons and objections, it is with a mind full of prejudices, and reſolv'd before-hand to think them frivolous, and not to alter their ſentiments. They ſatisfy themſelves with ſome ſorry argument, or wretched anſwer. If any ſcruples and difficulties remain, they ſhake them off in a trice, and ſet their conſcience at reſt, with this conſideration, that they follow the common opinion; they make no doubt but that they are ſafe, as long as they ſide with the greater number. Beſides, the advantages of the world which may be obtain'd by the adhering to the general opinion, would fully determine them, if they were not determin'd before, and they eaſily perſuade themſelves, that their ſpiritual welfare and the truth are to be found in that party, which agrees beſt with their temporal intereſt.

2. Cuſtom is likewiſe, the chief obſtacle to the reſtoring of order in the Church. I could here make a long article, if I would mention all the defects, which may be obſerved in the ſtate of the church and of religion, with relation to order. But having done this already in the beginning of this ſecond part, I ſhall only ſay in general, that nothing contributes ſo much to the maintaining of diſorder as cuſtom does. The moſt beneficial laws and inſtitutions are look'd upon as dangerous innovations, when they are not authorized by practice: men dare not ſo much as attempt to introduce them. On the other hand, uſeleſs or ill practices, are thought ſacred eſtabliſhments, as ſoon as they are confirmed by time and cuſtom. If men do but endeavour to lay aſide ſome ceremony, to make ſome alteration in a liturgy, or in the form of divine-ſervice: it ſeems to many, that the very eſſence of religion is ſtruck at. Thus it happens that abuſes which are palpable, and acknowledged by all men of ſenſe, ſubſiſt for whole ages and cannot be reformed.

The difficulty of reviving the apoſtolical diſcipline, and of reſtoring Church-government and the miniſtry of paſtors, to the ſtate they ought to be in, proceeds from the ſame cauſe. Becauſe a certain form of eccleſiaſtical government and diſcipline, obtains in a country, it is pretended to be the beſt and moſt perfect, in which nothing is to be altered, and thoſe are not ſo much as heard, who propoſe the eſtabliſhing of another. If any one thinks it a fault to ſuffer ſcandalous ſinners in the boſom of the Church, if he thinks that they ought to be excommunicated, and that Chriſtians ought to maintain no familiar intercourſe with them; though ſuch a man has the laws of the apoſtles on his ſide, yet he ſhall be called an innovator. Though he ſhould plainly ſhew the inconveniences of the ordinary practice, and the neceſſity of diſcipline, from Scripture, from the pattern of the firſt Chriſtian ages, and by the moſt convincing arguments;

arguments; yet cuſtom will ſtill be urged againſt him; the divine laws ſhall give place to common uſage, and the preſent practice ſhall prevail above that of the primitive Chriſtians.

III. Example and cuſtom have a great force, eſpecially in thoſe things which concern manners. Men are not altogether ſuch ſlaves to cuſtom in matters of opinion about religion, becauſe opinions are ſhut up within the heart, but in practical things and in manners, there are few men who are not carried away by the ſtream of the multitude. People think themſelves excuſed from the obſervation of the plaineſt and the moſt ſacred duties, as ſoon as they cannot obſerve them without departing from cuſtom, and ſo they conform to the common uſe how bad ſoever it may be. Thoſe who condemn the vicious and corrupt manners of the age, and practiſe the rules of the Goſpel, who for inſtance abſtain from ſwearing, and reprove thoſe who do it, who make ſcruple of lying and of tranſgreſſing the rules of their duty; are look'd upon in the world as humourſome people, and ſtigmatized with odious names and imputations. If they plead the expreſs commands of Chriſt and his apoſtles; inſtead of giving up the cauſe, men will ſtrain the Scripture, and by forced explications and impious gloſſes, endeavour to fix a ſenſe upon it which may favour the ordinary practice. While piety dares not ſhew it ſelf, vice is reſpected, and bad men carry it boldly every where, becauſe the numbers are of their ſide. Maxims directly oppoſite to the moral precepts of our Saviour, are not only received and tolerated, but they are defended as innocent, for this ſingle reaſon, that the generality of men approve and practiſe them. This might be confirmed by innumerable inſtances.

We can hardly imagine any thing more contrary to the precepts of the Goſpel, than that worldly life which is led by many Chriſtians. They ſpend their whole time in the cares of the body, they wear out their lives in idleneſs, gaming, pleaſures and divertiſements; they deny themſelves nothing, they make it their ſtudy to live luxuriouſly and to gratify themſelves. This kind of life is inconſiſtent with piety, but becauſe it obtains among perſons of the higher rank, it is very hard to perſuade thoſe who follow it, that they ought to quit it. It is by alledging common practice, that men defend a ſoft and effeminate life, faſhions contrary to chaſtity and modeſty, the too great familiarity of the young perſons of both ſexes, the reading of ill books, the plays which wound honeſty and religion, ſcandalous diverſions, and thoſe aſſemblies where the moſt enticing baits and allurements to vice are to be met with, and where the minds of young people receive the moſt dangerous impreſſions: all theſe things, I ſay, are defended by cuſtom.

So that when luxury, and expenſiveneſs and ſtate in apparel, eating, or furniture, are once eſtabliſhed; we endeavour to no purpoſe to bring men to Chriſtian moderation, and to baniſh that multitude of ſcandals and vices, which muſt needs attend ſuch kind of exceſſes. Thus in ſome nations where drunkenneſs is in vogue, it is in vain to oppoſe ſo vicious a cuſtom. In ſpite of all that can be ſaid againſt drunkenneſs and intemperance, people are ſo far from parting with that vice, that they fancy there is no ſin in being drunk.

To put up no injuries, to indulge revenge, to be tender and nice upon the point of falſe honour, to ſtick at nothing that can promote one's fortune,

tune, to aſſume all ſhapes, to diſguiſe one's ſentiments, and to ſupplant others; all theſe are maxims which are followed without ſcruple, becauſe they are authorized by uſe, and by the falſe opinions of men. It would ſignifie nothing to alledge to thoſe who are poſſeſſed with ſuch ſentiments, what the Goſpel enjoyns us concerning patience, forgiving of injuries, humility, ſincerity, juſtice and charity; ſuch morals will not be ſo much as hearkened to, becauſe theſe matters are otherwiſe determined to cuſtom. By the ſame reaſon it is pretended, that in offices, in trade, in arts and in the various profeſſions of life; every thing which is uſually practiſed by men in thoſe ſeveral callings, may lawfully be done. Nay, even an oath is not ſufficient to undeceive people; moſt men explain their oaths and regulate their conſciences by the examples of others; they uſe all the methods of gain, which cuſtom has introduced, without enquiring whether they are juſtifiable or not.

When I ſpeak here of cuſtom and example, I do not only mean that which is eſtabliſhed by general uſe, but that likewiſe which is authorized by men in credit. The quality of perſons produces the ſame effect that great numbers do; one ſingle example has ſometimes as much force, as the united examples of a multitude. All that is done and appoved of by princes, great men, magiſtrates, and perſons of quality, is a law to a great many people. A ſmall number of conſiderable perſons, who join their endeavours to bring a practice into faſhion, is enough to make it in a little time to be generally followed, how bad ſoever it may be. This is ſo commonly ſeen, that I think it needleſs to give inſtances of it.

I ſhall add three conſiderations, which deſerve a very particular attention; I have already touched them by the by, but I will propoſe them more diſtinctly here.

1. That common opinion, that it is neceſſary to embrace the ſentiments and the ways of living which are received in the world, is that which makes corruption ſpread and inſinuate itſelf every where. Men make it a law to themſelves, and repute it honourable to comply with cuſtom. It is laid down for a maxim, that we muſt live as others do, and accommodate our ſelves to the faſhions which are eſtabliſhed, and that it would make us ridiculous, if in behaviour and manners we ſhould differ from the age and the place we live in. I do not abſolutely reject this maxim, becauſe it is capable of a very good ſenſe. A Chriſtian ſhould not profeſs an unſociable piety: he may lawfully obſerve certain decencies, and comply to a certain degree with the opinions and manners of thoſe he converſes with; nay, he ought to do this for the intereſt of religion and piety. But ſuch a compliance and ſuch regards become criminal, when they engage him to act againſt duty and conſcience. If the cuſtom be bad, he ought to depart from it, and to do in ſpite of it, whatſoever God commands; he does not deſerve the name of a Chriſtian who has not the courage to do this.

And yet few people are capable of this reſolution, the greateſt part is overcome by the temptation of the multitude; the regard they bear to the example and judgement of others, produces in them a falſe ſhame which hinders them from doing their duty, and prompts them to evil notwithſtanding all the checks of conſcience. And nothing is ſo fatal and pernicious in the ſtate of thoſe who thus comply with cuſtom, as that

that they become such habitual slaves to it, that they are no more able to alter their conduct. When a man is once got into a certain course of life in the world, he pursues it, and he is still engaging deeper into it, till at last he comes under a kind of impossibility of leaving it tho' he would; because in order to that, he must break off those ties and engagements, which he has been contracting for a great while; he must withdraw from divers companies, and enter quite upon another way of living; now it is very seldom, if ever, that people can resolve upon all this.

2. Even those persons who are well dispos'd, are shaken by example and custom: I said something of this in the chapter of false shame. A great many are satisfied, that the side of the multitude is not the best, and that the manners of the age do not agree with religion; but they dare not swerve from custom, the fear of being hated, reproached, or despised, restrains them, and frequently extorts sinful compliances from them.

I shall take notice to this purpose of what happens every day to young people, whom parents have endeavoured to breed up to piety and good manners. When they first go out of their father's house, they are ashamed and afraid of doing ill things, sin raises some kind of horror in them. With these dispositions they launch into the world, they are placed either in the army or at court. And there they do not find those maxims of piety practised which have been infused into them, but they have only ill examples before their eyes. They see there persons who have been recommended to them for patterns, of whom they are to learn how to behave themselves, upon whom their promotion and fortunes depend, and who are reputed honest men; they see such persons I say living in a licentious manner. This at first surprizes and troubles them, their conscience holds out for a while, but example does insensibly lessen in them the abhorrence of vice, their good dispositions vanish in a little time, and at last they swim with the stream, they embolden themselves in ill things, and they become finished libertines. They do in like manner drink in the atheistical sentiments, which commonly are in fashion among persons of quality. If they are but told, that men of wit and quality do not believe a thing, or, that they entertain any opinion; that is enough to make them embrace that opinion, and question the truths of religion.

3. In the last place men are apt to think that if custom does not justify, it does at least excuse vice, and that if they do amiss in the following the general practice, it is but a sin of infirmity which God will not take notice of. This is the last refuge of a great many persons; they will own, that men's manners are very much depraved, and that there is little of true piety among them, but they will say; this is the fashion now-a-days, this is the way of the world, and he cannot be very guilty, who does only what others do. Nay, several men who are not libertines, and who see what should be done for the good of the Church, and the promoting of piety, fancy themselves under no obligation to oppose custom. Their excuse is, That it signifies nothing to strive against a torrent. So that sloth and timorousness together, magnifying the difficulties which their imagination represents to them, they make no efforts, and they let things go on at the usual rate. While custom corrupts and blinds some, it intimidates and discourages others; and thus vice and disorder are still taking deeper roots.

Now

Now two ſorts of remedies may be applied to this cauſe of corruption, to wit, particular and general remedies.

The particular remedies are thoſe cautions which every body ought to uſe, to prevent his being ſeduced by example and cuſtom. There are two principal means for a man to keep himſelf free from this ſeduction, the firſt is to avoid ill examples as much as poſſible, to withdraw from thoſe converſations, and to abſtain from thoſe imployments which draw men into ſin, and to chuſe a kind of life which may not engage us too far into the world; and on the contrary, to ſeek after good examples, and to be converſant with virtuous perſons.

* But as, notwithſtanding all theſe circumſpections, we cannot avoid being often tempted by ill example, ſo we ought in the ſecond place to arm and fortify our ſelves againſt this temptation; by ſtrongly poſſeſſing our minds with the ſentiments which religion inſpires. I have ſhewed elſewhere, what judgement a Chriſtian ought to make of cuſtom and men's opinion. It is evident, that God having ſet us a law, by which he will judge us, and having given us the knowledge of that law, and powerful encouragements to make it the rule of our deportment; neither example nor the judgement of the world, can any ways excuſe us from doing what God commands, or deliver us from the puniſhment which our diſobedience deſerves. Thoſe who have a greater regard to cuſtom than to their duty, are ſo much the more inexcuſable; becauſe the Goſpel expreſly forbids us, to govern our ſelves by the practice or example of the men of the world. St. *Paul* exhorts Chriſtians † *Not to be conformed to this preſent world, not to walk after the courſe of this world, not to follow other men's way of living; to renounce the world and the luſts of it.* Our Saviour enjoyns his diſciples, *To avoid the wide gate and the broad way of the multitude*, and to ſtrike into *the narrow path which is walked in but by a few.* Theſe are reflections, which every man who believes the Goſpel, ſhould frequently and ſeriouſly make, and which ſhould ſerve him for remedies againſt the temptations ariſing from example and cuſtom.

There are other general remedies, which tend to leſſen the number of bad examples, and to alter the cuſtom and uſages which are contrary to the Chriſtian religion. For tho' it may ſeem, that to go about the aboliſhing of that which is eſtabliſhed, by a general cuſtom and a long uſe, is to attempt an impoſſibility; and tho' we cannot expect that this cauſe of corruption ſhould be entirely removed, yet the difficulty is not ſo great, but that it might in ſome meaſure be overcome.

This we might have reaſon to hope for, if firſt, thoſe who know and love their duty would diſcharge it with courage, and if they did add to their knowledge a zeal ſupported by prudence and firmneſs. How great ſoever the degeneracy of men may be, there is ſtill ſomething in virtue, which attracts their reſpect and their love. The endeavours of good men againſt vice, are always attended with ſome ſucceſs: if the benefit of their exhortations and good examples does not reach far, they may at leaſt be uſeful to their families and their acquaintance.

But ſomething more than this is requiſite to reform general cuſtoms and

* See Part I. Cauſe III. Art. II. 4, &c. Cauſe V. Art. II. about the end.
† Rom. xii. Eph. ii. and iv. Tit. ii. Mat. vii. 13, 14.

and practices; and none can do this more eaſily and effectually, than thoſe who are raiſed above other men, and who are in public ſtations. I ſay therefore ſecondly, That if Chriſtian princes and magiſtrates, would uſe their authority to this end, and be exemplary themſelves, the corruption of the world would conſiderably abate, and bad examples would neither be ſo frequent nor ſo forcible as they are. It is in their power to baniſh the greateſt part of thoſe cuſtoms which are commonly received, and to eſtabliſh contrary ones. The care and example of paſtors are likewiſe a moſt efficacious remedy. If they did inſtruct Chriſtians as they ought, if they did oppoſe the corruption of the age with the pure maxims of the Goſpel, if they did ſet themſelves againſt abuſes, if they did endeavour in public and in private, to bring all thoſe that err into the way of truth, if they applied themſelves to the inſtructing of youth, and if their manners were edifying and exemplary, there is no doubt but that they would ſoon ſtop the current of vices and ſcandals. It ſhould be their chief care to oppoſe abuſes and ill cuſtoms in their beginnings; becauſe when they have once taken root, the remedy is much more difficult. In fine, as cuſtoms are eſtabliſhed by degrees, ſo they are not aboliſhed all at once, and therefore thoſe who do not ſucceed at firſt in ſo good a deſign, ought not preſently to be diſcouraged and to grow away.

CAUSE VII.

Books.

THIS is the laſt Cauſe of Corruption which I ſhall mention, but without queſtion, it is one of the moſt general and of the moſt remarkable. Books are as many public fountains, from which vaſt numbers of notions and ſentiments which are commonly received among men, and which are the principles of their actions, diffuſe themſelves into the world: and as it is impoſſible but that among an infinity of books, a great many muſt be bad, ſo it is certain, that books contribute very much to the keeping up of corruption. If men, as we have ſhewed in the precedent chapters, are ignorant and full of prejudices, if they have looſe and impious notions concerning religion, if great defects are obſervable, both in the lives of Chriſtians and in the ſtate of the Church in general; if the people are ill inſtructed, and children are ill educated, the cauſe of all theſe diſorders is partly to be found in books. It is therefore a moſt important ſubject which I am to handle in this chapter, but it is likewiſe a very large one by reaſon of the prodigious multitude of books, which I might have an opportunity to ſpeak of here. But I muſt confine my ſelf to that which is moſt material to be ſaid upon this head. I ſhall ſpeak, 1. Of ill books. And, 2. Of books of religion.

The number of bad books is infinite, and it would be very hard to give a catalogue of them; but I think that among all the ſorts of ill books none do greater miſchief in the world, than either thoſe which lead to irreligion

irreligion and impiety, or thoſe which are impure and filthy. The firſt attack faith, and the other corrupt manners.

1. The moſt dangerous of all books are thoſe which attack religion, ſuch are not only all the books of Atheiſts and Deiſts, but ſuch are likewiſe all thoſe works which tend to overthrow either the authority of the holy Scripture, or the facts and doctrines of Chriſtianity, or the difference between virtue and vice, or any other principle of religion. I rank alſo in the ſame order the books which introduce ſcepticiſm, and the deſign of which is, to render the principles of faith or morality uncertain and dubious.

Thoſe books in which impiety appears bare-faced, are not the moſt pernicious. Few perſons ever durſt maintain Atheiſm only, or deny directly, the fundamentals of religion. And beſides avowed Atheiſts and Deiſts have not many followers. Their opinions raiſe horrour, and a man's mind rebels againſt them. But thoſe men, who tho' they do not openly eſpouſe the cauſe of impiety, but pretending all the while that they acknowledge the exiſtence of a God and a religion; do yet ſhake the principal truths of faith; thoſe men, I ſay, diffuſe a much more ſubtil and dangerous poiſon, and this may be particularly ſaid of the Scepticks. In the main they drive at the ſame thing with the Atheiſts, they aſſault religion with the ſame weapons, and make the ſame objections. There is only this difference, that the Atheiſt decides the queſtion and denies, whereas the Sceptick after he has muſtered up all the objections of the Atheiſt and ſtarted a thouſand ſcruples, leaves in ſome manner the queſtion undetermined; he only inſinuates that there is no ſolid anſwer to thoſe difficulties, and then he concludes with a falſe modeſty, and tells us that he dares not embrace either ſide, and that which way ſoever a man turns himſelf, he meets with nothing but obſcurity and uncertainty: this differs little from Atheiſm, and it does naturally lead to incredulity.

It is an aſtoniſhing thing, that books containing ſuch pernicious principles ſhould have been publiſhed, and that libertiniſm in opinions about religion, ſhould have grown up to that pitch which we now ſee it at. The enemies of Chriſtianity did never oppoſe it with ſo much ſubtlety and with ſuch vigorous efforts, as ſome Chriſtians do at this day. Some books appear from time to time, which are only collections of all the objections of Heathens and Atheiſts againſt the exiſtence of God, againſt Providence, the divinity of Scripture, the truth of ſacred hiſtory, the foundations of morality, and many other important heads; ſo that impiety is now arrived at its greateſt height. It might be more general, but we cannot imagine how it could riſe higher.

And this occaſions a very conſiderable objection. It may be aſked, How it came to paſs that incredulity and ſcepticiſm, ſhould appear in ſo knowing an age as this is, and that men of parts and learning ſhould entertain ſuch impious ſentiments? It is neceſſary to dwell a little upon the examining of this difficulty, becauſe it is ſo apt to perplex many. The Infidels urge it with great aſſurance, and they pretend to infer from it, that religion cannot ſtand a philoſophical and learned age, and that none but the mob and the credulous part of mankind believe it. They ſay, that ignorant ages were the moſt favourable times to religion, that then

every thing was believed; but that ſince men have begun to examine matters a little more narrowly they are become credulous.

But any reaſonable man who does not love wrangling, may eaſily be ſatisfied upon this point. Firſt, Infidels have no ground to ſuppoſe, that men had more faith, in the ages of ignorance than they have now; for this ſuppoſition is altogether falſe. There was but little faith in thoſe ages, for we are not to call by the name of faith, a ſilly credulity which made the groſſeſt impoſtures to paſs then current, for certain, and even for divine truths. The Infidels do likewiſe ſuppoſe falſly that the learning of an age more enlightened than the precedent, is prejudicial to religion; for on the contrary it has done great ſervices to it. If ſome ſubtle ſpirits have attackt it, a great many knowing and judicious perſons of extraordinary erudition and eminent worth have illuſtrated and proved the truth of it, with greater ſolidity of arguments, than ever was known before. This muſt be acknowledged to the honour of God, and for the credit of the Chriſtian religion.

But it will be ſaid, That thoſe who make objections againſt religion, are learned; that they are philoſophical men, who in all other things reaſon true, and can diſtinguiſh truth from error. Let it be ſo; but then I aſk thoſe who urge this objection, how it happens that we ſee every day men of parts and ſenſe, who yet will obſtinately maintain palpable errors, and refuſe to yield to the evidence of ſome truths, which are clear as the ſun? To this nothing elſe can be ſaid, but that ſuch men are not ſo knowing and perſpicacious as they ſhould be, or that they do not make that uſe which they ought of their parts and judgment. I confeſs, that indeed that a man muſt have ſome parts and ſubtilty to be able to find difficulties every where. But that man makes a wretched uſe of his parts, when they ſerve him only to wrangle about the moſt certain truths.

Thoſe which the Infidels call ſtrong objections againſt the truths of faith, are but for the moſt part vain ſubtilties and meer flights of wit, which may be uſed alike upon all ſorts of ſubjects. That we may be convinced of this, I ſhall only name here ſome of thoſe truths or matters of fact, which are thought unqueſtionable, and which no man, tho' he had a mind, can doubt of. It is certain that the ſame objections by which the Infidels attack religion, may be turned againſt ſuch truths or matters of fact. The ſubtilties of ſcepticiſm may puzzle a man, who ſhall maintain, that there was heretofore an emperor at *Rome* called *Auguſtus*, or who ſhall believe with all mankind that parents ought to love their children, and that it would be a ſin to murder a poor wretch who is begging an alms; I ſay, a man, who maintains theſe truths, may be hard put to it, before he can get rid of all the queſtions of a captious ſophiſter. But does it follow from thence that this man is miſtaken? Is it to be imagined that a man can doubt in good earneſt whether or not there was ever at *Rome* an emperour named *Auguſtus*, or whether parents ought to love their children? Will any ever be ſo extravagant as to believe ſeriouſly, that it is indifferent whether we can cut a poor man's throat, or give him an alms? The ſubtilties of arguments ſignify nothing againſt facts which are well averred, or againſt thoſe natural ſentiments, which are common to all mankind. Now religion is founded upon facts, and its principles are in part natural truths and ſentiments, which

which we muſt needs feel and believe at all times. He that would deſtroy religion muſt confute thoſe facts and ſentiments, and infidelity will never be able to do it.

Philoſophical knowledge is very much extolled by the Infidels; they pretend chiefly to a great exactneſs in reaſoning, and yet they viſibly run counter to right reaſon, and tranſgreſs the rules which true philoſophy preſcribes. It is contrary to reaſon, to judge that a thing is falſe or dubious, becauſe there are ſome difficulties in it; it ought to be conſidered, that no man knows all things, or is able to anſwer all objections, and that what ſeems obſcure to one man, will appear very clear to another. When we have reaſons on the other hand to believe that a thing is true, when its proofs are ſtronger and more numerous than its difficulties, and when there are proofs which upon other occaſions are ſufficient to determine our judgment, true ſenſe requires that we ſhould yield to ſuch an evidence. This method is particularly to be followed, when the matter in queſtion is of ſome moment. In ſuch things we are wont to govern ourſelves by the greater evidence, and to chuſe the ſafer ſide. What can be therefore more irrational, than to hazard eternity, and to queſtion the truth of religion, upon ſuch conſiderations as would have no weight with us, and as would not ſtop us a minute in the ordinary affairs of this life?

Further, it is contrary to the rules of good ſenſe, to paſs a judgment upon thoſe things of which we have no diſtinct idea, or which we do not thoroughly know. Men who can give no account of the operations of their ſouls, or of a hundred things, they ſee before their eyes, will yet talk at random about the manner in which God acts, or foreſees future events; about what God ought or ought not to have done for the orderly diſpoſing of all things; about the ends which that ſupreme Being propoſes to it ſelf, and about the means which may conduce to thoſe ends. This is the height of extravagance and temerity, and yet it is at this rate, that the Infidels reaſon.

I muſt add beſides, that men of parts are ſubject to the ſame paſſions with the vulgar, and that thoſe paſſions hinder them from diſcerning the truth. Theſe makers of objections who pretend to politneſs and wit, are not generally found at heart, but they love licentiouſneſs; they are not addicted perhaps to a groſs and ſhameful, but to a more refined libertiniſm; they obſerve a little decorum, but they do not reliſh the maxims of devotion and piety, and they cannot endure to be tied to them. Vanity has likewiſe a great ſhare in their conduct. A great many imagine, that it is for their credit to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the vulgar, and not to believe the things which are believed by the people: and when they have once embraced this way and ſet up for Scepticks in the world, they think themſelves bound in point of honour, to maintain that character.

Men of knowledge are ſometimes governed by many prejudices, and falſe motives. A preconceived notion or a meer circumſtance is ſufficient to determine them to the embracing of an opinion. What has been ſaid of the conduct of princes, may be applied to the opinions and hypotheſes of the learned. Wars and ſuch other great events, upon which the fate of nations depend, and which make ſo much ſtir in the world, do not always proceed from wiſe and mature deliberation; ſome-

times they are but the effect of a paſſion, of a humour, or of ſome particular circumſtance. Thus it is with the learned: we think too well of them, if we fancy that they are always determined by the greater weight of reaſon. The motives which prompt them to maintain certain opinions, are often very ſlight. They are not ſenſible of this; they think themſelves guided by reaſon, and they do perceive the true principle of their actions or judgments. If Infidels did ſtrictly examine themſelves, they would find perhaps, that their ſcruples were firſt raiſed, and have been maintained ſince, either by ſome book they read when they were young, or by the love they had for ſome perſons, or by their averſion to others, or by ſome ill treatment they have met with, or by the praiſes which have been given them for their wit, or by ſome prejudice they have conceived againſt religion in general, when they heard it ill defended; or againſt certain tenets which are particular to the ſociety they live in, and manifeſtly abſurd; or by ſome other motion of this nature.

If we call to mind in the laſt place, what has been ſaid in the beginning of this treatiſe, to wit, That few Chriſtians apply themſelves ſincerely to the ſtudy of the general truths, and of the principles of faith; we ſhall not wonder that among ſo many, who never inquired into the proofs of religion, ſome ſhould be inveigled by the objections of libertines, and fall into infidelity.

I have in a manner ſtept out of my way; but this digreſſion is not impertinent, ſince theſe conſiderations may ſerve as a remedy againſt incredulity and ſcepticiſm, which ſome authors would fain eſtabliſh by their writings.

One would think that every body ſhould abhor thoſe impious books, but yet they are read and liked by many perſons. Young people eſpecially, who for the moſt part love novelty, and are inclined to vanity and licentiouſneſs, do eaſily imbibe the principles which are ſcattered through ſuch books: they are impoſed upon by the genteelneſs, the wit, and ſome kind of learning which they commonly find there: being not well grounded in religion, they are ſtruck with the reaſonings of Infidels; the very firſt objection puzzles them; they begin to doubt of many things, and in a little time they become thorough-paced Scepticks. I leave any one to judge, what effects this may produce in an age ſo prone to vice as this is, and if young people can avoid being corrupted, when they are no longer reſtrained by religion and conſcience. There is no condition more remedileſs, nor is there any ſtate more deplorable, than when incredulity is joined with diſſoluteneſs of manners. People there are hardly to be reclaimed; age and ill life fortify their doubts and ſcruples, and they continue in that ſtate to their dying day. This is the fruit which many reap from the reading of thoſe pernicious books, but it is not all the miſchief which is occaſion'd by ſuch writings. They may fall into the hands of many who have no great compaſs of knowledge, and beget ſeveral ſcruples in the minds even of good men. After theſe reflections, I make no doubt but it will be granted, That no books are more dangerous than theſe, and that to have the confidence of publiſhing them, is a ſuperlative degree of impiety.

II. The books I have now ſpoken of, aſſault religion and piety in general, and by conſequence open a door to all manner of diſorders and vices:

vices. There are others which tho' they do not attack the principles of faith, do yet introduce licentiouſneſs of manners. It would be a long work, if I ſhould ſpecify here their ſeveral ſorts, which are as many as there are vices, paſſions, or received errors among men: this is a detail which I cannot enter into. Being then forced to ſtint myſelf, I ſhall only ſpeak of impure books; and I chuſe this particular ſpecies of ill books, becauſe the number of theſe is not only very great, but becauſe they are thoſe likewiſe, which do moſt generally corrupt men.

Their number is prodigious. Firſt we have the obſcene books of the Heathens, which are not only read by men, but are put likewiſe into the hands of youth. Some people are ſo infatuated with theſe books, that they fancy one cannot be a maſter of the Greek or Latin, unleſs he has read all the obſcenities written in thoſe two languages; which is as extravagant an opinion, as if a man ſhould pretend, that whoſoever deſigns to acquire a thorough knowledge of the French, or of any other living language, and to be able to ſpeak and write elegantly in it, muſt read all the lewd poems and all the ſcandalous books which this age has produced.

Secondly, Beſides impure books of Pagan authors, we have thoſe that are writ by Chriſtians. The world is over-run with books of this ſtamp, their number increaſes every day, and their amazing multitude is one of the ſtrongeſt proofs of the extreme corruption of the times. It is the laſt degree of impudence to write in that ſtyle, and then to diſperſe it in the world by the preſs: the diſſolution muſt needs be very great, when this is done ſo freely and ſo often as it is in this age. Nothing can be imagined more laſcivious or execrable than ſome books which have been, and ſtill are publiſhed from time to time: Paganiſm did never produce any thing more abominable upon the head of impurity, than ſeveral works which were hatch'd in the very boſom of Chriſtianity; ſo that in this reſpect Chriſtians have no cauſe to reproach Heathens.

Theſe deteſtable books are not the only impure ones, nor perhaps the more dangerous; vaſt numbers of others are current in the world. What are ſo many books of love and gallantry, ſo many ſcandalous novels either feigned or true, and ſo many licentious pieces of poetry, but the productions of that ſpirit of impurity and diſſoluteneſs which prevails in this age? Nay, even books of learning which treat of ſerious ſubjects, have a mixture of impurity. This infection is diffuſed through all ſorts of books, and appears every day in ſome new ſhape.

As the number of impure books is great, ſo their effect is moſt pernicious; and none ought to wonder that I ſhould aſſign theſe books as one of the general cauſes of corruption. No bad books are more generally read than theſe, none can with more reaſon be called publick fountains of vice and diſſoluteneſs. The miſchief they do in the world cannot be imagined. They prove to an infinity of perſons, but eſpecially to young people, ſchools of licentiouſneſs. It is by the reading of them, that youth learn to know and to love vice. That age is prone to pleaſure and to every thing that gratifies ſenſe; and that inclination is ſo much the ſtronger, becauſe it is cheriſhed and fortified by an education altogether ſenſual, and becauſe young people for want of good inſtruction, have not much piety, nor any great averſion to vice. From whence we may eaſily judge, that they are ſuſceptible of thoſe paſſions which gra-

tifie ſenſuality; and that it is hard for them to reſiſt thoſe impreſſions, which the reading of impure books conveys into their minds. We ſee in fact, that uncleanneſs is commonly the firſt ſin and the firſt paſſion which ſeduces men in their youth, and which engages them into vice, for their whole life: for it ſeldom happens but that all the ages of life, retain a ſpice of the irregularities of youth.

And yet for all that, theſe books have their advocates. Many perſons reckon, that there is no harm either in reading, or even in publiſhing them. If we believe ſome authors, who infect the public with books full of obſcenities; none but fantaſtical people, poſſeſſed with a ridiculous and preciſe devotion, find fault with thoſe that write upon this ſubject. And in defence of their opinion, they alledge this maxim, * *To the pure all things are pure*; as if St. *Paul* who does not allow Chriſtians ſo much as to ſpeak an undecent word, did permit them to read and write things which are contrary to modeſty, and may occaſion ſcandal: from this maxim they conclude, that there is nothing in thoſe books that offends modeſty or religion; and they proteſt that for their part, the reading of them does not defile their imagination. I do not know the particular frame of thoſe men's hearts; perhaps impure ideas and laſcivious objects, are grown ſo familiar to them, that they do no longer perceive, that ſuch ideas and objects make any impreſſion upon them. But it is unconceivable how people can preſerve a chaſte heart, when they delight in writing or reading filthy things. After all, tho' the reading of ſuch works ſhould have no ill effects upon ſome perſons, there are a great many more who will make an ill uſe of them; and this is enough to make every man who has any ſenſe of religion to deteſt impure books.

What I have now ſaid will be granted by many, but it will be thought, that to rank books of love and gallantry among impure books, and to condemn the reading of them, is ſomething too ſevere. I confeſs, that all thoſe books are not equally bad, and that ſome do not hurt modeſty ſo viſibly as others do. But yet there are not many, in which a ſpirit of impurity and licentiouſneſs may not be obſerved. That love which makes the ſubject of ſo many books, is nothing elſe at bottom, but an impure and irregular paſſion, of which the Goſpel obliges us to ſtifle the very firſt motions. What the world calls a meer intrigue of gallantry, is ſometimes a pretty large ſtept towards the ſin of adultery. Sin indeed may be diſguiſed in thoſe books under another name, and may be dreſs'd in a modeſt garb, but that makes it ſlide the more eaſily into the mind. It is dangerous to dally with things, which deſerve the utmoſt averſion of a Chriſtian; and it is almoſt impoſſible but that the horrour of impurity and of every thing that comes near it, muſt inſenſibly abate, in any one who is addicted to ſuch readings. There are two maxims in the Goſpel which decide this matter; the one is, † *That we are to abſtain from the appearance of evil*; the other, that in things indifferent, we ought to avoid whatſoever may prove a ſcandal or an occaſion of falling to any body, eſpecially when the ſcandal may be foreſeen. Now here is at leaſt the appearance of evil; it is certain that divers perſons will make an ill uſe of thoſe books, and by conſequence the reading and publiſhing of them cannot be excuſed.

But

* Tit. i. 15. † 1 Theſſ. v. 22. See Rom. xiv. 13. 1 Cor. 10, &c.

But as if it were not enough to maintain, that the books in queſtion may be read without ſin; it is pretended beſides, that the reading of them is uſeful and neceſſary to open the minds of young people. I do not deny but that it is a valuable quality to have quick and well-faſhioned parts, but there are other books which may be read without danger, and which are much fitter to form the minds and judgments of young people, than books of gallantry, the reading of which, every body knows, has often ſpoiled the minds of thoſe who were given to it. The greateſt miſchief that attends this kind of reading, is that it corrupts the heart and ſullies the imagination, at the ſame time that it opens the mind. Now it were better to have a little leſs of that faſhionableneſs and politeneſs of parts, which is ſo much eſteemed in the world, then to acquire it at the expence of one's innocency.

But ſome people do not ſtop here. They proceed ſo far as to ſay, that theſe books are uſeful even in reference to religion, and that they are proper to reſtrain youth from vice; becauſe we ſee in them the follies and misfortunes which irregular paſſions betray men into. I can hardly think that this is alledged in earneſt. It is a ſtrange ſort of remedy againſt impurity, to make agreeable pictures of love, and to repreſent minutely, and in a natural and inſinuating manner, all the motions which that paſſion excites in thoſe who are poſſeſſed with it. We muſt be very ill acquainted with the tempers of men, and particularly of young people, if we can fancy that the reading of ſuch books, will put them upon moral reflections, and inſpire them with an averſion to vice. Daily experience ſhews that nothing is more vain or falſe than ſuch an imagination.

It will be ſaid, that at leaſt thoſe books ought to be excepted, in which among love-matters and licentious ſubjects, the reader meets with fine moralities; which may however ſerve for a preſervative. But theſe books are not much better than the others; nay, I cannot tell whether they are not more dangerous. Thoſe moralities are very ill placed, and few people are the better for them. It is a very ſuſpicious kind of morality, which comes from the pen of thoſe authors, who write indifferently upon matters of love, and religious ſubjects; who ſometimes ſeem to be libertines and ſometimes devout; who after they have ſaid a hundred licentious things, given you the hiſtory of a great many diſorders, and related ſeveral ſcandalous paſſages; entertain you with devotion and piety: this is a monſtrous mixture. If thoſe authors were truly religious, they would forbear writing thoſe things which religion condemns, and which ſcandalize the publick. Such books are particularly fit to confirm worldly men in their opinion, that gallantry, provided it does not proceed to the higheſt degree of crimes is no great ſin, and to perſuade young people that they may eaſily grow devout hereafter, tho' they now ſpend their youth in libertiniſm. From all theſe conſiderations I infer, that let people ſay what they will, all the books which preſent their readers with impurity, either bare-faced, or under ſome vail, are extremely pernicious.

Having thus diſcourſed of ill books, I come now to the books of religion. It may ſeem at firſt, that I ſhould rather ſeek in theſe the remedy, than the cauſe of corruption. Indeed the end of religious books ſhould be to baniſh corruption and to eſtabliſh piety in the world, and

there are many of them which attack ignorance and vice with ſucceſs, and which may prove excellent preſervatives againſt the corruption of the age. But I hope no body will take it amiſs if I ſay that there are books of religion, which do not conduce much to the promoting of piety, nay that ſome prove hind'rance to it.

This I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew. I ſhall not ſpeak of any particular book, I will only offer ſome general conſiderations, which my readers may apply as they ſee cauſe. It is not my deſign to rank among bad books all thoſe works, to which ſome of the following reflections may be applied. Some indeed are down-right bad, but many are in ſeveral reſpects good and uſeful tho' they have their faults; and as good books ought to be diſtinguiſhed from bad ones, ſo is it no leſs neceſſary, to diſcern what is good in every book, from what is naught or uſeleſs.

The books of religion which I think ought here to be taken notice of, are of four ſorts. 1. Thoſe which explain the Scripture. 2. The books of divinity. 3. The books of morality. 4. The books of devotion.

1. It cannot be denied but that among the books of the firſt ſort there are ſome very good ones, and that we have at this day great helps for the underſtanding of the holy Scripture. But it ought likewiſe to be granted, that ſome of thoſe books which are deſigned for the expounding of Scripture, do only obſcure and perplex the ſenſe of it. It would be tedious to mention here all the defects of that kind of writing, I ſhall therefore obſerve only the principal.

1. The firſt and the moſt eſſential is the not expounding of Scripture, according to its true meaning; and this fault, which is but too frequent in commentaries, proceeds chiefly from two cauſes: 1. That expoſitors do not apprehend the ſcope of the ſacred writers: and, 2. That they enter with prejudices upon the reading of Scripture.

The true way to underſtand the Scripture, is, to know the ſcope of it, and never to ſwerve from that. Good ſenſe and piety, joyned with the ſtudy of languages, hiſtory, and antiquity, are here very ſerviceable. A commentator ought in a manner to tranſport himſelf into thoſe places and times in which the ſacred authors lived. He ſhould fancy himſelf in their circumſtances, and conſider what their deſign was, when they ſpoke or writ; what perſons they had to deal with, and what notions, knowledge or cuſtoms did then obtain. But thoſe who, being ignorant of theſe things, ſet about expounding the Scripture, can hardly do it with ſucceſs. It is a wonder if they do not miſs the true mark, and if they do not obtrude forced, and very often, falſe gloſſes upon their readers.

On the other hand, many authors apply themſelves to the examining of Scripture with a mind full of prejudices. They explain it by the preſent notions of the world. Nothing is more uſual with commentators than to make the faithful under the Old Teſtament ſpeak as if they had been as well acquainted with the truths of the Goſpel as Chriſtians are; and as if thoſe queſtions and diſputes, which are treated in common-places of divinity, had been agitated at that time. When thoſe expoſitors, for inſtance, meet with the word *righteous* or *righteouſneſs* in the *Pſalms*, they fancy that *David* had in his thoughts all that divines have vented concerning juſtification; and upon this ſuppoſal, what do they not ſay, or what do they not make preachers ſay? It has been obſerved, that

almoſt

almoſt all commentators are partial, and endeavour to put upon the Scripture a ſenſe that favours the opinions of their reſpective ſects. This ſpirit of a party is chiefly remarkable in ſome of thoſe commentators which theſe laſt centuries have produced.

2. The ſecond rule of a commentator ſhould be, to expound clearly and familiarly the literal ſenſe of Scripture, and never to have recourſe to a myſtical expoſition, but in thoſe places where the ſpirit of God directs us to look for it: and yet a great many authors do almoſt intirely forſake the literal ſenſe, to purſue myſtical explications. In their opinion, every thing is myſtical in the holy Scripture, eſpecially in the Old Teſtament. They are not contented with unfolding the true myſteries and prophecies which manifeſtly relate to the times of the Goſpel, but they turn all things into figure. They find myſteries, allegories, types and prophecies every where, even in the plaineſt diſcourſes. This they call ſearching and diving into the Scriptures. But this way of expounding the word of God is a fountain of illuſions: for as the Holy Ghoſt does not explain thoſe pretended myſteries, ſo they muſt be put to their gueſſes and be beholden to their imagination for the diſcovery of them; and he that is the moſt copious or lucky in his conjectures, is the greateſt man. Now I leave any one to judge, whether commentators, who follow no other guide but their imagination, can avoid being very frequently miſtaken, and giving a great many handles to libertines and infidels.

3. We are not to forget here the ſchool-commentators. The holy Scripture ſhould be expounded in a ſimple and popular manner; and this cannot be denied, if we conſider that it was given for the inſtruction and the ſalvation of all men, and that the diſcourſes of Chriſt and his Apoſtles were addreſſed to the common people, and to ſuch perſons as were far from being philoſophers. Nothing therefore ſeems more repugnant to the deſign of Scripture, than to explain it philoſophically, and, which is worſe, according to the principles of a falſe philoſophy, as divers commentators do. They make uſe of the method, notions, and terms of the ſchools, to find out the meaning of the ſacred writings. They apply to all ſubjects the rules preſcribed by the ſchool-men. They carefully diſtinguiſh in a text thoſe things which are called in the ſchools *Materia*, *Forma*, *Cauſa efficiens*, *Finis*, *Subjectum*, *Adjunctum*, &c. They ſeek in all reaſonings the *Major*, the *Minor*, and the concluſion, as if the Holy Ghoſt, inſpiring the ſacred authors, had followed the ſcheme of *Ariſtotle*'s logick, and had intended to make ſyllogiſms in mood and figure. I ſay nothing here of that ſpirit of diſpute and wrangling which runs through the ſcholaſtical commentaries, nor of the falſe ſenſes and metaphyſical explications, which they put upon the Scripture. Such books are obſtacles rather than helps to the underſtanding of the word of God; they are fit only to perplex what is clear, and to ſpoil divines and preachers, by taking away from them that qualification they had moſt need of, I mean, good ſenſe.

4. Another very different way from that ſimplicity with which the Scripture ſhould be handled, is the method of thoſe authors, who without neceſſity inſiſt upon all the circumſtances of a text, who ſift all the terms of it, as if a myſtery did lurk in every word; who deſcend to the minuteſt things and weary themſelves in conjectures and queſtions. This

exactneſs is very uſeleſs and inſipid. It may be ſometimes neceſſary to clear a difficulty, to unfold an intricate meaning, and to obſerve the critical ſignification of words: but when the ſenſe is natural and eaſie, and when the words are clear, to what purpoſe ſhould a man inſiſt upon all thoſe illuſtrations? What need is there for him to be always preſſing the ſignification of words, to remark all their different acceptations, and to explain what is to be underſtood by the words, *Death*, *Faith*, *Juſt*, every time that theſe terms occur. The true method is to purſue the things themſelves and the meaning of a text, without criticizing upon words and circumſtances.

5. It is the fault of many commentators to be prolix and too large. From every verſe, nay, from every word, they take occaſion to run into a common-place, and to vent a multitude of notions, ſo that they really give us ſermons, diſſertations, or lectures of divinity, under the title of commentaries. I do not abſolutely condemn diffus'd commentaries; we meet ſometimes with good things in them, but we find there likewiſe a great many which ſignifie nothing. When all is done, brevity, clearneſs, and exactneſs, are infinitely to be preferred in a commentary before prolixity and copiouſneſs; ſuch length breeds obſcurity and confuſion, it makes preachers lazy, it tempts them to fill their ſermons with a hundred needleſs things, it brings them to a cuſtom of being tedious, of making digreſſions, and of paſſing by that which is eſſential and ſolid: all which is very far from promoting the edification of the church.

Beſides, it is evident, That the defects of commentaries contribute very much to the corruption of Chriſtians. The holy Scripture is the foundation of religion and piety; but commentaries are the ſtores from which the ſenſe of Scripture is drawn, and from which preachers commonly take the matter of their ſermons. Few of them endeavour to find out the ſenſe of a text by their own induſtry; they conſult their commentaries like oracles, and they blindly follow their deciſions; it is therefore highly requiſite that theſe books ſhould not lead into error thoſe who have recourſe to them. When a blind man leads another, they both fall into the ditch. If then the guides, to whoſe conduct preachers give up themſelves, are deceitful and falſe, the word of God will neither be well underſtood, nor well preached, and both preachers and people will err.

II. It is with divinity-books as with commentaries; ſome are good, and others bad. The diverſity of opinions which we ſee among authors, is a proof of what I ſay; ſome maintain as divine truths, things which others reject as falſe and pernicious ſentiments; ſo that there muſt be no ſmall error on one ſide or the other. All divines will own the truth of this remark; but it is here of no uſe, becauſe it does not decide which books of divinity are good, and which are bad. Every body will pretend that the bad books are thoſe which teach a doctrine contrary to that which obtains in the ſociety to which he belongs. In order to know who is in the right, or in the wrong, it would be neceſſary to judge here upon the merits of the cauſe, and to enter into the examination of all the controverſies which divide Chriſtians. But this I will by no means take upon me to do: it would be fitter for me to take notice of thoſe faults which are common to the greateſt part of divinity-books. I ſhall ſay nothing but what muſt needs be owned by all the ſenſible divines of any party;

party; and the reflections I am to make, tho' general, may perhaps be of ſome uſe to direct our judgement concerning the doctrine it ſelf contained in thoſe books.

1. Almoſt all the authors who have writ of divinity, have made of it, upon the matter, a ſcience of meer ſpeculation. They eſtabliſh certain doctrines, they deliver their opinions, they prove them as well as they can; they treat of controverſies, and confute their adverſaries; but they do not ſeem to have meditated much upon the uſe of the doctrines they teach, with relation to piety and ſalvation. They are very ſhort upon this head, which yet is the chiefeſt of all; they are not by half ſo ſolicitous to aſſert the duties, as they are to maintain the truths of religion. Now this is not teaching divinity. The deſign of religion is to teach men how they ought to ſerve God, and to make them holy and happy. If this was conſidered in the handling of divinity, and if care was taken to ſhew what relation all the parts of religion have to the glory of God, and to the holineſs and felicity of man, there would be much more piety than there is now among Chriſtians. Thoſe who ſtudy divinity would learn betimes to direct it to its true end; and this would likewiſe be a means to diſtinguiſh material from inſignificant points and queſtions, and to eaſe religion of all thoſe needleſs diſputes, which are one of the main cauſes of the corruption of Chriſtians.

2. What I have now ſaid leads me to a ſecond obſervation; which is, that as ſeveral things might be left out of divinity-books, ſo other things are wanting, which it would be neceſſary to add to them. For the purpoſe, common places do not inſiſt much upon the general truths and principles of religion. They ſcarce give us any inſtruction about Church-diſcipline and government, or about the belief and practice of the firſt ages of Chriſtianity: as for morality, it is there touched but very ſuperficially. And yet theſe are eſſential articles in divinity, the knowledge of which is neceſſary to thoſe who are called to preach the Goſpel, to guide a Church, or to direct men's conſciences.

3. Divinity-books are, for the moſt part, too ſcholaſtical. The method of the ſchool has been long in vogue; and tho' the ſchoolmen's ways of handling divinity, may juſtly be looked upon as a defiance to ſenſe and religion; yet that method has prevailed to that degree, that for ſome ages it was not lawful to ſwerve from it. Of late years indeed the ſchool-men have loſt a great deal of their credit; and in divinity, as well as in philoſophy, many perſons have no longer that blind deference for them which was paid heretofore. Yet, for all that, a great number of divines do ſtill ſet up that method for their rule, and it is ſtill as it were ſacred in colleges and univerſities. Common-places to this day ſavour too much of the barbariſm of the ſchools, and we find there but too many remainders of that dry and crabbed theology, which had its birth in the ages of ignorance. Inſtead of thoſe ſimple and clear ideas, which render the truth and majeſty of the Chriſtian religion ſenſible, and which ſatisfie a man's reaſon, and move his heart, we meet with nothing in ſeveral bodies of divinity but metaphyſical notions, curious and needleſs queſtions, diſtinctions, and obſcure terms. In a word, we find there ſuch intricate theology, that the very apoſtles themſelves, if they came into the world again, would not be able to underſtand it, without the help of a parti-

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cular revelation. This ſcholaſtick divinity, has done more miſchief to religion, than we are able to expreſs. There is not any thing that has more corrupted the purity of the Chriſtian religion, that has more obſcured matters, multiplied controverſies, diſturbed the peace of the Church, or given riſe to ſo many hereſies and ſchiſms. This is the thing which confirms ſo many eccleſiaſticks in their ignorance and prejudices, and which keeps them from applying themſelves to the ſolid parts of divinity, and to that which is proper to ſanctify men.

Now all theſe defects are viſible cauſes of corruption, which may be proved by this ſingle conſideration, that it is in common-places that Church-men learn their divinity: ſuppoſe then that thoſe books do not give them a true idea of religion, what religion or what divinity can ſuch men teach their people? One ſcholaſtick and injudicious author who is in credit in a country, and who is patronized by a profeſſor, is enough to ſpoil the minds of young divines, and to bring into repute the moſt abſurd and dangerous opinions and ſyſtems.

Tho' catechiſms are not uſually reckoned among divinity-books, yet it will not be uſeleſs to ſay ſomething of them here, ſome great men have beſtowed their pains upon works of this kind to very good purpoſe; and yet in this reſpect there is ſtill ſomething to be deſired for publick edification. 1. It is to be wiſhed that thoſe ſubjects ſhould only be treated in catechiſms, which ought to be handled there, and that all the matters and queſtions which are above the reach of the people and of children, or which are not neceſſary to ſalvation, ſhould be baniſhed from thence. 2. That ſome eſſential articles, about which catechiſms are very jejune, ſhould be added to them, and particularly theſe three; a general idea of the hiſtory of the bible; the main proofs of the fundamental truths of religion; and an exact explication of the duties of morality. This laſt article is for the moſt part extremely neglected in catechiſms; nothing can be more dry and ſuperficial than what they ſay upon the decalogue. 3. It would be fitting to make ſome alteration in the method obſerved in catechiſms; for they are not all familiar enough: ſchool-terms or figurative phraſes are uſed in them; which either the people do not underſtand, or to which they affix falſe ideas. For inſtance, I would not have it ſaid, *That the euchariſt is the ſymbol of our ſpiritual nouriſhment, and of our union with Jeſus Chriſt:* for beſides that this is not an exact definition, this ſtyle is not proper for a catechiſm. Theſe words *ſymbol, ſpiritual nouriſhment, union with Jeſus Chriſt*, are figurative and obſcure terms; would not the thing be plainer both to children and to every body, if we ſhould ſay, that the euchariſt is a ſacred action and ceremony, wherein Chriſtians eat bread and drink wine, which are diſtributed in remembrance of the death of Chriſt, and of the redemption wrought by him? In thoſe works which are intended for youth and for the common people, it concerns an author to be clear and accurate, to omit nothing that is eſſential, to ſay nothing that is needleſs, to uſe plain and proper expreſſions, and to propoſe nothing but what is natural and eaſy to be apprehended. Catechiſms are deſigned to give children the firſt tinctures and ideas of religion: now thoſe ideas, we know, commonly ſtick by them as long as they live; if then they are not clear and true, it is not poſſible for them ever to be well acquainted with their religion.

III. The

III. The third ſort of books are thoſe of morality. This important part of religion which regulates manners, has been treated with a great deal of ſolidity and force in ſeveral excellent works. Nay, it is obſerved, That morality is more cultivated of late than it has been heretofore. But it were to be wiſhed that the good books of morality we have at this day, were of a more general uſefulneſs than they are. The beſt works of this kind, are above the people's capacity. There are various things in them, relating either to the reaſoning part, the turn of thoughts, or the ſtyle, which cannot be underſtood, but by knowing and diſcerning perſons. Almoſt all the able men who write upon morals have this fault, That they ſpeak too much like ingenious men, and do not accommodate themſelves enough to the capacity of the readers. They do not conſider, that they ought to be uſeful to every body, that what ſeems clear to them, is obſcure to the greateſt part of thoſe who peruſe their writings, and that a book of morality, which is only underſtood by men of parts or learning, is of a very limited uſefulneſs. They ſhould therefore, at leaſt in ſome of their works, endeavour to ſpeak in a popular manner, and to handle matters with all poſſible clearneſs and ſimplicity. This would be no diſparagement to them, and the doing it well would, I think, require all the abilities, parts and talents, of the beſt writers: it is more difficult than it ſeems, to ſpeak or write in ſuch a manner, as that a man ſhall ſay all that is proper to be ſaid, and at the ſame time be intelligible to all ſorts of perſons.

But if there are good books of morality, there are many on the other hand, which have conſiderable faults in them, and thoſe faults are of great conſequence, becauſe morality ill explained, is capable of doing more hurt than good.

1. An author who treats of morality ſhould always have theſe two rules in his view. 1. To explain exactly the nature of the duties which it preſcribes. And 2. To perſuade men to the practice of thoſe duties. Now theſe two rules have not been ſufficiently obſerved by all thoſe who have publiſhed moral books, 1. They do not always repreſent with due exactneſs the nature of vice or virtue. Either the notions they give of them are not true, or they are too general. On the one hand, they are not accurate enough, in deſcribing the true characters of each virtue and vice; and on the other hand, they do not diſtinguiſh their various kinds and degrees, which yet ought to be done if they intend that men ſhould know their own pictures. 2. They do not preſs men enough to the practice of virtue. The end of morality, is to work upon man's heart and paſſions. In order to compaſs this end two things are neceſſary. 1. That all thoſe great motives which the Goſpel affords, ſhould be ſtrongly urged: and 2. That the falſe reaſons and motives which engage men into the love of this world and give them any averſion to holineſs, ſhould be confuted. Morals cannot be uſefully handled without the obſervation of theſe two maxims, the ſecond eſpecially: for the reaſons why many are not prevailed upon by the arguments and motives which are offered to them, is, becauſe they are hindered by other arguments and motives. A reader frames in himſelf a hundred objections againſt what he reads in a book of morality; man's heart is no ſooner inclined to any vice, but it grows fertile in evaſions, reaſons, and pretences. Every

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ſinner has his excuſes and his ſhifts. If thoſe who teach morality do not obviate thoſe objections and deſtroy thoſe excuſes, they can never obtain their deſign; but this is a trouble which few authors care to take upon them.

2. Books of morals would produce more fruit than they do, if the morality they teach was neither too much relaxed, nor too ſevere. Morality is relaxed, when it does not propoſe the duties of a Chriſtian life in their full extent, or when it does not aſſert the abſolute neceſſity of the obſervation of thoſe duties. It is ſtrained and too ſevere, when it impoſes duties which God has not commanded, or which cannot poſſibly be practiſed; and when it ranks among ſins things which are innocent. I touch this only by the by, becauſe I have ſpoken already in ſome other places of this Treatiſe, both of the remiſs and over-ſevere notions which men form to themſelves about religion. See Part I. Cauſe I. Art. II. and Cauſe II. Art. V. VI. and Part II. Cauſe III. Art. I.

3. Some of the authors who handle morality are guilty of another fault, and that is a want of accuracy and exactneſs in their ideas and reaſonings. They do not conſider enough, whether every thing they advance is ſtrictly ſolid and true, whether the principles they lay down will hold, whether their maxims are not ſtretched too far or abſurd, whether they do not contradict themſelves, whether they do not make uſe of frivolous reaſons, whether nothing is falſe or mean in the motives they urge; in a word, whether or not their works will be able to ſtand the cenſure of a judicious reader. Moraliſts as well as the generality of preachers, are a little too much carried away by the heat of their imagination and zeal, and they do not reaſon enough. They often go about to move people with rhetorical figures, rather than by dint of reaſons. And this is a very ill method. In matters of morality, it chiefly concerns a man to ſpeak and to argue cloſe; without this it is impoſſible that he ſhould either convince the mind or produce a ſolid and diſcerning piety.

4. The world is full of books of morality, and yet there are ſeveral important ſubjects which have not hitherto been treated as they ought, or if they have, it was in works which are not read by the people. Thoſe who ſtudy morality are often ſenſible of this defect, and complain juſtly that they do not find in books, all the light and helps they look for there: it is but of late that any thing has been writ with exactneſs in French, upon reſtitution. Who can doubt but that a good book concerning impurity would be highly uſeful? This ſin is exceeding common, but it is one of thoſe about which the people are the leaſt inſtructed. If Chriſtians underſtood the nature of this vice, its conſequences, and the duties of thoſe who have fallen into it, they would certainly avoid it more carefully than they do. I might ſay the ſame of injuſtice, of ſwearing, and of ſome other ſubjects.

IV. I come in the laſt place, to books of devotion: it is very neceſſary to make a right choice of them, becauſe of all the books of religion they are thoſe which are the moſt read.

1. I cannot help ſaying in the firſt place, That there are books of devotion which are capable of introducing corruption of manners, and diverting Chriſtians from the ſtudy of holineſs. We may eaſily apprehend

how there should be books of this kind, if we consider that many, even among divines, think it dangerous to insist upon good works, and to press morality: and there are books of devotion, which were made on purpose to maintain so strange an opinion. Some authors have taught that true devotion and solid piety, is not that which consists in the practice of good works; they have writ that the doctrine which represents good works as a necessary condition in order to salvation, overthrows the doctrine of justification by faith; that works cannot be looked upon as the way to heaven; that all we have to do now under the Gospel-covenant, is to receive and to accept of the salvation purchased for us; and that the Gospel requires works, only from the motives of gratitude and love. Nay those authors enter into dispute; they attempt to refute the arguments drawn from the exhortations, promises and threatnings of Scripture which might be urged against them, and they tax with Pharisaism or Pelagianism, those who are of an opinion contrary to theirs. I cannot think the authors of such books did publish them with ill intentions, but I could wish they had abstained from writing things which give such mighty advantages to libertines, and which may blast the fruit of all the books of morality, and of all the exhortations which are addressed to sinners. And yet these books are printed, and which is more surprizing, those divines who are so rigid and scrupulous in point of books and sentiments, do not oppose the publishing of such works, but they suffer them quietly to pass for current in the world.

2. The books of mystical devotion are likewise most dangerous; and their number is greater than we imagine. For to say nothing of those in which mystical and fanatical principles are openly proposed, many works which are otherwise full of good things are sprinkled with that spirit of fanaticism. I shall not stand to give here the character of those books, nor to shew the mischief they may do in relation to libertines, or to those persons who want either knowledge or a discerning judgment; because I will not repeat what I have said of mystical piety, Part I. Cause II. Art. VIII.

3. Some authors who have put out books of piety have made it their whole business to administer comfort. Those who read their works, may easily see that they looked upon the comfortable side of religion, and that their principal design was, to fill their readers with confidence, hope and joy. Without doubt it is a laudable and pious design, to use one's endeavours to comfort the afflicted, and particularly good men; and I confess that we find in the books which have been composed with that view, many edifying things and noble sentiments of piety; but for all that, those books may easily inspire men with security when the consolations which they dispense, are not attended with great circumspection and prudence.

I could wish that all those who have published books of this kind, had well considered these two following truths. The first is, That the comforts which religion affords, belong only to true Christians; so that is an essential part of the duty of comforters, carefully to distinguish persons, and to mark clearly who those are that have a right to religious comforts. The second is, that it is as necessary to sanctifie, as it is to comfort men; nay, That the sanctifying them is the more necessary of the two,

because

becauſe holineſs is more eſſential to a good man, than conſolation and joy; and alſo becauſe men are much more inclined to preſume than to condemn themſelves; beſides that there are but few who want comfort, in compariſon with thoſe who ought to be terrified.

The conſolations of which the books of piety are full, are intended either for afflicted perſons or for ſinners. As for the firſt, it is better to teach them how to make a good uſe of their afflictions, and to bring them to examine and amend their lives, than to diſcourſe to them upon ſome general topick of comfort, which perhaps will only lay them faſter aſleep in ſecurity, and which is beſides generally miſapplied. For all that the Goſpel ſays of afflictions is commonly laid together, and that too with no great judgment; and what is ſaid only of the afflictions of the faithful who ſuffer for Chriſt's ſake, is applied to the afflictions which are common to all mankind. It is much more neceſſary to teach men how to die well, than to fortify them againſt the fear of death; nay, we cannot give them a more ſubſtantial comfort, than if we perſuade them to live well, ſince a good life will moſt certainly bring them to a happy death.

But we ought to be particularly cautious when we comfort ſinners and give them aſſurances of the divine mercy; for if this is not done with great circumſpection, we may eaſily harden and ruin at the ſame time, that we are comforting them. This is the miſchief of thoſe books, which ſpeak but little of repentance and inſiſt much upon confidence, whoſe only deſign it is to encourage the greateſt ſinners, and to exhort them to a bold reliance upon God's mercy, without fearing either the heinouſneſs, or the multitude of their ſins. Such conſolations are capable of a good ſenſe; but if they are not propoſed with due explication and reſtrictions, vaſt numbers of people will abuſe them. That which has been writ by ſome authors in books of devotion, concerning ſin and good works, is apt to lead men into this fancy, That good works ſignify nothing in order to ſalvation, and that ſin does not obſtruct it. Under pretence of anſwering the accuſations of the devil and of the law, theſe authors enervate the ſtrongeſt arguments for the neceſſity of good works, they confute the declarations of Scripture concerning ſanctification, and they deſtroy as much as in them lies, the ſincerity and truth of the precepts and threatnings of the Goſpel. For what they call the accuſations of the devil and of the law, is ſometimes nothing elſe but the juſt apprehenſions of a guilty conſcience which are inſpired by the Goſpel, and which ſhould be cheriſhed and fortified to bring ſinners to repentance, inſtead of being removed by ill-diſpenſed conſolations.

It is ſaid to this, that ſinners are not to be driven to deſpair. But do we make ſinners deſperate, by ſaying that they are not in a ſtate of ſalvation, when really they are not? Do we not comfort them enough, when we exhort them to have recourſe to God's mercy and to repent? What if we ſhould by unſeaſonable conſolations, fill them with a vain and groundleſs confidence; would not that ſecurity ruin them more certainly than deſperation? To make men fearleſs is the ready way to undo them. After all, I cannot imagine, why people ſhould talk ſo much of deſpair, and ſeem ſo hugely afraid of it. By the endeavours uſed in books and ſermons to keep ſinners from it, one would think that we had great

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reaſon to fear on that hand, and that nothing were more ordinary than for men to deſpair of the divine mercy; and yet there is nothing more unuſual. For one ſinner who is terrified with his ſins, thouſands are undone by ſecurity. It is remarkable that the Scripture ſpeaks but ſeldom of deſpair, and when we have well examined all the places which are thought to mention it, we ſhall not find many that ſpeak poſitively of it. Many Church-men who have cure of ſouls, confeſs that they never ſaw any perſon afflicted with deſpair. And as for the inſtances which are alledged to this purpoſe, it is certain that what is called deſperation is commonly nothing elſe but a fit of the ſpleen and an effect of grief and melancholy. So that thoſe who make long diſcourſes to prevent ſinners falling into deſpair, take great pains to little purpoſe, and do for the moſt part fight with a ſhadow.

4. There is another fault in ſome books of devotion quite contrary to this I have now obſerved, which is, that they terrify their readers, without reaſon. If authors, otherwiſe pious and learned, had not ſpoken in their writings of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, of reprobation, deſpair, the power of the devil, and of ſome other matters, many people would have been free from thoſe terrible frights which the indiſcreet handling of thoſe ſubjects did throw them into. The reading of ſuch books has occaſioned, and does ſtill produce great miſchiefs, when they are read by men of weak heads, that are inclined to melancholy; and the number of ſuch perſons is very conſiderable. Some have fancied they had committed the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and being poſſeſſed with that diſmal thought, they have ſpent their lives in dreadful apprehenſions, of which nothing could cure them. Others have imagined, That their caſe was deſperate, and that they were in a ſtate of reprobation, and damnation: others have conceited, that they were given up to the power of ſatan; and they have taken the diſorders of imagination, for certain ſigns of their being poſſeſſed with an evil ſpirit: and the worſt of it is, that ſuch indiſcreet diſcourſes are more apt to alarm good, than wicked men. In fine, I reckon among the books that fright men without cauſe, all thoſe which contain too rigid and auſtere maxims of devotion and morality.

5. Piety would be better known, and more eſteemed than it is, if books of devotion were always writ with judgment, and good ſenſe, and if there was nothing in them, but what, upon a ſevere examination, would appear to be ſtrictly true. Thoſe who ſet about works of this nature, do generally make it their buſineſs to move the heart, and to excite ſentiments of piety. This is a good deſign; but we ought to know that it is the force of reaſons; the evidence of proofs, the greatneſs of the objects propoſed, and the clearneſs and ſolidity of what a man ſays, which does truly affect the heart. This is what judicious authors chiefly mind; and thereby many have had good ſucceſs in thoſe excellent works which they have enriched the publick with. But other writers do not conſider this; they rather chooſe to ſay tender and pathetical things, than to think, or ſpeak with exactneſs: they conſult imagination more than good ſenſe, they pour out every thing, which, in the heat of meditation, or in the fervency of their zeal, ſeems to them proper to move, to melt, to comfort, or to terrifie. Hence it is, that there are weak

places in their books and thoughts; which appear mean, and even falſe, to diſcerning readers; contradictions, and ſuch like defects: for on the one hand, they produce only a confuſed, and not a very rational devotion, in thoſe who read and reliſh them: and on the other hand, they expoſe religion to the flouts, and contempt of libertines. We are often troubled and ſcandalized, to find, that ſome men of parts expreſs but little eſteem for books of piety: we hear it is ſaid every day, that thoſe books are only good for women, and for the vulgar. This contempt chiefly proceeds from a profane humour, and from libertiniſm; but it ſprings likewiſe from the want of exactneſs and ſolidity, which is obſervable in ſome books of devotion.

6. Divers conſiderations might be offered here about thoſe books which contain forms of prayers and devotion; but I ſhall confine my ſelf to theſe two, which appear to me the moſt material. The firſt is, That thoſe kinds of forms, make all ſorts of perſons indifferently, and even good men ſay things, which cannot agree, but to the greateſt and the moſt notorious ſinners; which gives people this dangerous notion, That all men, without excepting the regenerate, are extremely corrupt. In divers prayers we plainly ſee, that thoſe who compoſed them, had no other deſign, than to draw the picture of the moſt heinous ſinners, and that they ſuppoſed all men engaged in a deep corruption, and in the moſt criminal diſorders. Exaggerations, and hyperboles, are ſo little ſpared by ſome people upon this head, that they utter abſurdities and falſhoods in their prayers: as when they ſay, That ever ſince we were born, we have been continually, and every moment, offending God, by thoughts, words, and deeds.

I do not deny, but that ſuch prayers may have their uſe, provided nothing be ſaid in them that is extravagant, or contrary to truth and common ſenſe; they fit great numbers of perſons: there are but too many of thoſe wretched Chriſtians, who can never ſufficiently bewail the enormity of their ſins, and the irregularities of their conduct. I know beſides, that all men are ſinners, and that the beſt of them have reaſon to humble and abaſe themſelves in the ſight of God, out of a ſenſe of their own weakneſs and unworthineſs. Nevertheleſs, ſince the Scripture makes a difference between good and bad men, it is at leaſt a great piece of imprudence, to appoint the ſame language for both, and to make them all ſpeak as if they were guilty of the moſt horrid crimes, and as if there was not one good man in the world. This takes away the diſtinction between the ſinners and the righteous; for if theſe prayers are proper for all ſorts of perſons, if all that is ſaid in them is true, it is a vain thing to diſtinguiſh a good man from a bad; and, it is to no purpoſe to pray to God for his converting grace, or to make any promiſe of amendment to him: all thoſe leſſons of holineſs which the Goſpel gives us, are but fine ideas; all men are upon the matter equally bad, and they may all be the objects of God's mercy, how irregular ſoever their deportment may be. Theſe are the inferences which may be drawn from thoſe forms of devotion I have mentioned, and which ſinners do actually draw from them. From all this, I conclude, That in ſuch works it is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh *perſons* and *conditions*: and this accordingly has been judiciouſly obſerved by ſome authors.

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The other conſideration relates to the form of prayers; theſe are not always plain enough. They are ſometimes ſtudied diſcourſes, which have more of art and wit than of affection in them. And we may eaſily diſcern how far moſt prayers are removed from a due ſimplicity, if we compare them with thoſe which are contained in holy Scripture, or with the ancient way of praying which was received in the Church, and of which we may judge by the *liturgies* which are now uſed, or which have reached to us. Prayers were neither ſo intricate then, nor ſo long as they are now. Long preambles were not uſed in the beginning of prayers, and men did not then with ſo many windings approach the throne of grace, to confeſs their ſins, and to beg pardon for them. Prayers then were ſhort, ſimple and natural, much fitter to excite devotion, to lift up the heart to God, and to nouriſh piety and zeal, than many forms which obtain at this day.

7. Of all the books of piety, none are more carefully read; and none perhaps have a greater influence upon the conduct and manners of Chriſtians, than the books of preparation for the holy communion. The uſe of the ſacrament is one of the moſt important acts of religion, and one of the moſt efficacious means to promote piety; and it is certain that the books which people read, in order to prepare themſelves for that ſacred action, contribute very much to the good or bad uſe of the euchariſt, and by conſequence to the good or ill life of Chriſtians. Now what I have ſaid of the other books of devotion may be applied to theſe. Some books of this kind are extraordinary good, but there are others, in which among many good things ſome defects are obſervable, and particularly theſe three.

1. All the books of preparation for the holy Communion, are not inſtructive and ſolid enough. We find nothing elſe in ſome of them, but a heap of thoughts, which have no dependance upon one another, of rhetorical figures, allegories, and compariſons fetched from the Old Teſtament, or from prophane hiſtory. Theſe things may have their uſe; they may be placed in a ſermon: but not to ſay that ſometimes, thoſe thoughts and compariſons are not very appoſite or ſuitable to the ſubject; I ſhall only obſerve, That ſomething more than this is neceſſary, to ſtir up devotion in the communicants. I do but juſt name this, becauſe I have delivered my opinion more at large concerning this defect, in my three reflections upon books of morality, and in the fifth upon books of devotion.

2. Other books of preparation are too general. They only conſider in the lump the duties of Chriſtians in reference to the communion; they ſpeak of ſelf-examination, repentance, faith and charity: but all this is of no great uſe to many groſs and ignorant Chriſtians, who neither know thoſe duties, nor how they ought to be performed. Beſides, all thoſe who come to the ſacrament are not in the ſame condition, ſome being good men, and others impious and hypocritical perſons. There are likewiſe ſeveral degrees of good men as well as of hypocrites and ungodly perſons, and the ſame man may be better or worſe at one time than he is at another. Therefore it would be fitting that books of preparation were compoſed in ſuch a manner, that every reader may be led by them, into thoſe reflections which are ſuitable to the ſtate he is in. It is a groſs

error to imagine, that a general preparation or diſcourſe concerning the receiving of the ſacrament, is proper for all ſorts of perſons. I confeſs that this is not the fault of all the books of preparation; ſome we have, which are particular enough. The true characters by which every man may know his own ſtate, are very exactly deſcribed by ſome authors; but it is an unhappineſs that ſuch works are not better calculated for the uſe of the common people.

3. I think I may ſafely ſay in the third place, That the too ſevere notion which ſome books give of the communion, is one of the cauſes, why ſo many people do neither live, nor receive the ſacrament as they ought. It is a ſad thing that the minds of Chriſtians ſhould be filled with ſo many ſcruples in relation to the ſacrament, by inconſiderate diſcourſes and over-ſtrained maxims; writers and preachers do ſometimes ſpeak of the holy ſacrament, as if every thing in it was full of ſnares, and as if hell and damnation were conſtantly waiting about it. They repreſent the communion, as ſo extraordinary, ſo difficult and ſo dangerous an action, that thoſe who read or hear thoſe diſcourſes, are tempted to keep off from the holy table, and deſpair of partaking of it as they ought. So that whereas there ſhould be nothing but joy, when the euchariſt is celebrated in the church, many are then agitated with extreme perplexities and terrors.

By this indiſcreet ſeverity it happens, that many good men receive the ſacrament without comfort; becauſe their conſciences are diſturbed with divers ſcruples, which proceed from the reading of thoſe books. There is a great number of pious Chriſtians, who never receive the ſacrament but with ſtrange apprehenſion and dread, inſomuch that ſeveral think they receive it to their condemnation. Nay this diſcourages likewiſe many ſinners who have ſome inclinations to good, and ſome deſire to ſet about the work of repentance. Indeed we muſt take heed not to flatter ſinners in their vices, nor to propoſe to them too eaſie a devotion and morality. It is very fit, in my judgment, to give them a great idea of the purity which is required in ſo holy and ſolemn an action as the communion is, and of the ſtate which a Chriſtian ought then to be in. But as this ſtate of purity and holineſs is attained only by degrees; that idea, how true ſoever it may be, is apt to fright a ſinner, in the beginning of his converſion, becauſe he does not find in himſelf at firſt, all the characters of true repentance and ſincere regeneration: he ought therefore to be informed, that the beginnings of repentance are weak, that it has its degrees and its progreſs; and ſo that he ought not to be diſheartned; that God will accept of his devotion and endeavours, provided his repentance increaſe afterwards and he forſake his ſins honeſtly. The matter is over-done in point of devotion and morality, not only when we propoſe rules which are too rigid, but alſo when we ſay things, which tho' true and conſonant to the Goſpel, are not ſufficiently accommodated to the ſtate of thoſe we ſpeak to.

Theſe are the principal reflections I thought fit to beſtow, both upon books of religion and upon bad books. All that remains now is to inquire, what remedies are to be applied to the cauſe of corruption. The ſureſt of all would be to exterminate all the ill books, and to take care that none ſuch ſhould be made for the time to come. But as this is not to be hoped, the only remedy which can be tried, is on the one hand, to prevent

prevent as much as we can the effect of bad books; and on the other, to engage men to read and to make a good uſe of good books.

The books which are contrary to religion and good manners may eaſily be known; but how to keep men from reading and being corrupted by them is the difficulty: and in all probability this is a point which will never be entirely gained. Yet I think it is not impoſſible to prevent in ſome meaſure the miſchief which thoſe books occaſion in the world. In order to this, it would be requiſite, to take care in the firſt place, that young people might not read books which inſpire libertiniſm. To this end, the authors who have writ things repugnant to modeſty and honeſty, ſhould be expelled the ſchools. It is a ſurprizing thing that the eccleſiaſticks, who have the direction of academies and colleges, and who are bound by their characters to redreſs this abuſe, have not done it yet. In the next place it would be neceſſary, that in families, books that are apt to corrupt youth ſhould be taken out of their way, and that they ſhould not be indulg'd in dangerous readings. As for the reſt, I ſee no other remedy, but that preachers ſhould ſtrongly inſiſt in their ſermons, upon the reaſons which ought to make Chriſtians averſe to the reading of ill books. I know that all theſe precautions, will not wholly ſuppreſs thoſe books; nor prevent their being read by divers perſons; but we may however gain thus much, that ill books ſhall not be ſo freely and ſo commonly read as they are, and that they ſhall do leſs hurt.

As for books of religion, every one ſhould endeavour to diſcern thoſe which are good, and to make a good uſe of them. Indeed the diſcerning and the choice of books of religion, is attended with ſome difficulty. The general rule is to chuſe thoſe which are inſtructive and edifying. Every body will own this to be a good rule, but all men do not agree in the application of it. What ſeems edifying to ſome, appears quite otherwiſe to others. In point of religion all men ſhould be of the ſame mind, ſince they are all bound to believe the ſame truths, and practiſe the ſame duties; but their taſtes are different, becauſe many of them have a vitiated palate.

To ſpeak my mind upon this ſubject, I think that Chriſtians ſhould chiefly ſtick to thoſe books, which prove the truths of religion, and which eſtabliſh by ſolid arguments the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian faith, and to thoſe which give a clear and exact view of the duties of morality: to theſe it may be uſeful to add the works, in which we find the examples of perſons eminent for their piety and virtue. Such examples are very efficacious to excite men to the practice of what is good, and they prove a great preſervative againſt the ſcandal occaſioned by bad example, and againſt the corruption of the age. But not to enlarge further upon the choice of books, I refer the reader to what has been ſaid in this chapter.

A judicious choice of books being once made, the next thing is to make a good uſe of them. And here two rules are to be obſerved. 1. A man ſhould read with judgment; and, 2. he ſhould read in order to practiſe.

1. What book ſoever we read, it is abſolutely neceſſary to read it with diſcretion and judgment. We are commanded in Scripture, * *To prove all*

* 1 Theſſ. v. 21. 1 John iv. 1.

all things, and to hold faſt that which is good; to try the ſpirits and the doctrines whether they are of God. This caution is to be uſed leſt we fall into errors, ſince every author is a man, and by conſequence may ſometimes be miſtaken. The common people do particularly need this advice, becauſe they are very apt to believe, that whatſoever is read in books, eſpecially in books of devotion, is true. But tho' a book ſhould contain nothing but what is good; diſcretion is neceſſary to make a juſt application of the contents of it to our ſelves, becauſe that which is proper for ſome is not ſuitable to others. The not obſerving this rule is the reaſon why ſome readers, who have a pure, but a timorous and ſhort-ſighted conſcience, are terrified without cauſe, and apply to themſelves what is ſaid only of wicked men; when on the other hand, hardned ſinners deceive themſelves with vain hopes, by adapting to themſelves, what relates only to good men.

2. We ought to read, in order to practiſe, and that we may grow better; this is the more important rule of the two, and that which diſtinguiſhes true from hypocritical devotion. Many are very regular and conſtant in reading, and they ſeldom fail to do it mornings and evenings: but the deportment of thoſe perſons who are ſo aſſiduous in the peruſing of good books, is not always agreeable to the rules of devotion and piety. When they are but juſt come from their reading, we may find them ſowr, peeviſh, and paſſionate; after they have read in the morning, they ſpend the day in ſlandering, gaming, or idleneſs, and they avoid only the groſſer, and the more noiſie ſins. There are readers of another character; they read, and even delight in the reading of books of religion: they like well enough thoſe works which prove the truths of the Chriſtian religion, or treat of morals; they ſpeak of them advantageouſly, and they will ſay fine things concerning the abuſes which are crept into religion, and upon the neceſſity and the beauty of morals: but all this terminates only in a vain and fruitleſs approbation, which they give to the truths and duties of the Goſpel; for after all, they reform nothing in their lives: ſuch readings are but meer amuſements, and they are good for nothing but to rock conſcience into a moſt dangerous ſleep. The end of reading, as well as that of religion, ought to be the practice of holineſs.

I ſhall here obſerve, laſt of all, That Chriſtians have a book, which alone might ſuffice to preſerve them from the danger of ill books, and to ſecure them againſt the corruption of the age, if they did uſe it as they ought; I mean the holy Scripture: it is the beſt of all books, a work divinely inſpired, which contains nothing but what is moſt excellent and true, and wherein we find every thing that is neceſſary to inſtruct, and to ſanctifie men. But it were to be wiſhed,

1. That the tranſlations of Scripture, which are in the hands of the people, ſhould be rendered more perfect, ſo that they might expreſs the ſenſe of ſacred authors with all poſſible exactneſs. All thoſe who have ſtudied the original text of the Bible, will own, that this is a neceſſary work, and that the tranſlations need ſome amendments. And ſo we ſee accordingly, that now and then, divines and tranſlators, apply themſelves to the correcting of them.

2. It would be to no purpoſe to have exact tranſlations of Scripture, if men could not read it: I have already remarked it elſewhere, as a crying

and

and ſhameful abuſe, that a great part of Chriſtians ſhould not be able to read. This abuſe ſhould have been reformed long ago; and this might eaſily be done, if every paſtor did endeavour it in his own church, and if the magiſtrates did lend a helping hand towards it.

3. The holy Scripture ſhould be read more than it is, and men ſhould make that uſe of it for which it was given. Other books are only ſtreams, but when we read the Scripture, we drink at the very fountain-head. Humane books have their faults, and therefore they ought to be read with great diſcretion: but this divine book is moſt perfect, it is a guide to whoſe conduct we may give up our ſelves without fear or danger: this being certain, is it not ſtrange that the beſt of all books ſhould be the moſt neglected? In many countries the Bible is a book unknown to the people. In other places the reading of it is permitted but with great cautions, as if it were dangerous for Chriſtians to read a book, by which God was pleaſed to reveal his will to men. In thoſe places where Chriſtians have an entire liberty to read the Scripture, great multitudes make no advantage of that freedom. Many that are addicted to reading leave the word of God for other books. In a word, very few read it with ſuitable diſpoſitions, and with a ſincere deſign of learning the will of God and of growing the better by it. And thus the far greater part of mankind, is deſtitute of the moſt efficacious mean and remedy, which the divine goodneſs has afforded to men, to preſerve them from the contagion of ſin, and to make them happy. And ſo we need not wonder that the corruption of Chriſtians ſhould be ſuch, as it hath been repreſented in this work.

The Concluſion of this Treatiſe.

THIS is what I had propoſed to ſay concerning the Cauſes of Corruption. I might have been larger upon theſe matters, and have added many things which I have not touched. This is a very copious field, and a ſubject which can hardly be exhauſted; yet I think I have obſerved what is moſt material.

But it will be to little purpoſe to have detected the cauſes of corruption, if thoſe cauſes do ſtill ſubſiſt; and therefore I conclude this work with an earneſt entreaty to my readers, That they will make ſerious reflections upon it, and that if they find that in fact, corruption proceeds from thoſe cauſes I have mentioned, they will ſtrive to remove them. The undertaking will, no doubt, appear very difficult to many. They will own the truth of what I have ſaid, but they will look upon the deſign of oppoſing the corruption of the age, as vain and chimerical. They will ſay that all this is very fine in the theory, but that the practice of it is impoſſible: I confeſs here is ſome difficulty, but yet I am perſuaded, that what I have propoſed might ſucceſsfully be done, at leaſt in ſome reſpects.

But the general cauſes of corruption can ſcarce be remedied but by

publick perſons. I therefore apply my ſelf here particularly to divines and to the paſtors of the church, and I conjure them to make it their ſerious buſineſs, to diſcover and to ſtop the ſprings of corruption. Let them turn all their endeavours that way; let them labour to diſpel the ignorance and prejudices which ſo many Chriſtians live in, and to confute thoſe maxims and ſentiments which feed ſecurity and libertiniſm; let them preſs with zeal the reſtoring of order and diſcipline; let them inceſſantly lay before the people and the magiſtrates, the neceſſity of redreſſing ſeveral abuſes which are now in vogue; let them inculcate theſe things and inſiſt upon them with zeal, but at the ſame time with prudence and charity; let them concert meaſures among themſelves; let them act unanimouſly in ſo noble a deſign. Above all things let them take care to ſeaſon young people with good inſtructions, and to inſpire them with ſentiments of religion and virtue. Theſe are the ſolicitudes which become the miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe are enterprizes worthy of their character and their zeal, and the things which ought chiefly to be conſidered in the aſſemblies of the Clergy. But let them not be diſcouraged by the difficulties they are like to meet with. They will ſtill gain ſomething, even when they may fancy they labour in vain. If they do not obtain all that they deſire, if they do not cure the whole evil, they will remove at leaſt ſome part of it. So holy an enterprize will ſooner or later be fortunate in the iſſue, and God will pour down a bleſſing upon thoſe means which he himſelf has appointed.

One would think that Providence is at work to bring about happier times, and that things are tending that way. This is an age of knowledge, and religion is now better proved and explained than ever it was. There is a conſiderable number of judicious and learned divines, and paſtors, who are deeply griev'd to ſee the preſent face of things, and who are ſenſible how neceſſary it would be to oppoſe corruption. So many books which are writ on purpoſe to revive true Chriſtianity, and to bring men to holineſs, ſeem to bode ſome bleſſed revolution, and to argue a general diſpoſition towards it. God who preſides over all things, and particularly over that which concerns religion, bleſs the deſigns and endeavours of all thoſe, who have good intentions, and grant that we may quickly ſee truth, piety, peace and order, intirely reſtored among Chriſtians.

THE

THE DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE accuſation that *Celſus* and *Julian*, the grand adverſaries of the Chriſtian religion, had the impudent confidence to faſten upon it; namely, That it indulgeth men in, and encourageth them to, the practice of immorality and wickedneſs, is ſo notoriouſly falſe and groundleſs; that there is nothing truer, or more perſpicuouſly held forth in the books that contain Chriſtianity, than that the perfectly contrary is the *great deſign* of it. But yet notwithſtanding, thoſe that ſhall heedfully obſerve the lives and actions of an infinite number of ſuch as call Chriſt their maſter, would be very ſhrewdly tempted undoubtedly to conclude, that they ſecretly think, what thoſe Heathens had the face to publiſh.

And as for (I fear I may ſay) even moſt of thoſe profeſſors of faith in Chriſt, which have eſcaped the *ſcandalous* and more *groſs* pollutions of the world; that man that ſhall take an exact ſurvey of *their* converſations alſo, and conſider what matters they moſt buſy themſelves about, what the deſigns are which they chiefly proſecute, and that not only as *men*, but as *Chriſtians* too; what things they are that exerciſe moſt of their *zeal*, and for and againſt which is ſpent the greateſt part of their *religious heat*; will be ſtrongly inclined to ſuſpect, that, though they have not entertained ſo highly diſhonourable an opinion of their Saviour, as to eſteem him a patron of vice, yet they think ſo undervaluing of him, as to judge him ſo mean a friend to holineſs, as that the promoting it in men's hearts and lives, if it was at all a deſign of

his coming into the world, and of the religion he left behind him, yet it was at beſt but a *bye-one*, and that ſome other matters were much more in his eye, and principally intended by him.

Though I will not ſay that the greater part of our moſt forward profeſſors have their heads leavened with ſuch thoughts, yet any one may dare to affirm that they behave themſelves exactly as if they had: and moreover I am abſolutely certain, that it is utterly impoſſible, men ſhould make ſuch a buſtle, and ſtir about matters of none, or but ſmall importance, to the ſerving or prejudicing the real intereſt of their ſouls; and, on the other hand, be as lukewarm, unconcern'd and careleſs in diverſe things that have the moſt *immediate* and *direct* tendency to their eternal welfare; if they *duly* conſidered and had a quick ſenſe of what was now intimated, *viz. That the buſineſs that brought the bleſſed Jeſus by the appointment of God the Father down from heaven; and the end of his making us the objects of ſuch rich and tranſcendent kindneſs, was the deſtroying of ſin in us, the renewing of our depraved natures, the ennobling our ſouls with virtuous qualities and divine diſpoſitions and tempers, and* (in one word) *the making us partakers of his holineſs.* And ſo long as there are but few that either believe or conſider, that this is *the end of Chriſtianity*, and that alone which it *directly* drives at, it cannot be matter of wonder, if multitudes of thoſe which lay a great claim to it, ſhould be (as excellent a religion as it is) little the *better*, nay, and in ſome reſpects even the *worſe* for it.

And on the contrary, it is not to be in the leaſt doubted, That nothing can be ſo available to the introducing of a better ſtate of things, the abating and perfectly quenching our intemperate heats, the regulating and bringing into due order our wild exorbitances, the governing and reſtraining our extravagant and heady zeal, the induing us with becoming tempers, ſober thoughts, and good ſpirits, as would the thorow belief, the due minding and digeſting of this one principle.

And for this reaſon, I am not able to imagine how time may be ſpent to better purpoſe, than in endeavouring to poſſeſs men's minds with it: and to contribute thereunto, what it can, is the buſineſs of this Treatiſe: whereof theſe following are the general heads: which ſhall be inſiſted on with all poſſible perſpicuity, and convenient brevity, *viz.*

Firſt, *A plain Demonſtration, that, True Holineſs is the Special Deſign of Chriſtianity.*

Secondly, *An Account, how it comes to paſs that our Saviour hath laid ſuch Streſs upon this, as to prefer it before all other.*

Thirdly, *An Improvement of the whole Diſcourſe, in diverſe (and moſt of them* Practical) *Inferences.*

SECT.

SECT. I.

A Demonstration, that True Holiness is the Design of Christianity.

CHAP. I.

The Nature of True Holiness described.

IN order to the demonstration hereof, it is necessary to be premised, That the *holiness* which is the design of the religion of Christ *Jesus*, and is by various forms of speech express'd in the Gospel (as by *godliness*, *righteousness*, *conversion* and *turning from sin*, *partaking of a divine nature*, with many other) is *such* as is so in the most *proper* and *highest* sense: not such as is subjected in any thing *without* us, or is made ours by a mere *external application*, or is only *partial*; but is originally seated in the *soul and spirit*, is a complication and combination of all virtues, and hath an influence upon the whole man (as shall hereafter be made to appear) and may be described after this manner.

It is so sound and healthful a complexion of soul, as maintains in life and vigour whatsoever is essential to it, and suffers not any thing unnatural to mix with that which is so; by the force and power whereof a man is enabled to behave himself as becometh a creature indued with a principle of reason; keeps his supreme faculty in its throne, brings into due subjection all his inferiour ones, his sensual imagination, his brutish passions and affections.

It is the purity of the humane nature, engaging those in whom it resides, to demean themselves suitably to that state in which God hath placed them, and not to act disbecomingly in any condition, circumstance, or relation.

It is a divine or god-like nature, causing an hearty approbation of, and an affectionate compliance with the eternal laws of righteousness; and a behaviour agreeable to the essential and immutable differences of good and evil.

But to be somewhat more express and distinct, though very brief.

This *holiness* is so excellent a principle, or habit of soul, as causeth those that are possessed of it (I mean so far forth as it is vigorous and predominant in them)

First, To perform all good and virtuous actions, whensoever there is occasion and opportunity; and ever carefully to abstain from those that are of a contrary nature.

Secondly, To do the one, and avoid the other, from truly *generous* motives and principles.

Now, in order to the right understanding of this, it is to be observ'd, That *actions* may become *duties* or *sins* these two ways.

First, As they are compliances with, or transgressions of divine *positive* precepts. These are such declarations of the will of God, as restrain

strain our liberty for great and wise reasons, in things that are of an indifferent nature, and absolutely considered, neither good, nor evil: and so makes things not good in themselves (and capable of becoming so, only by reason of certain circumstances) *duties*; and things not evil in themselves, *sins*. Such were all the injunctions and prohibitions of the *ceremonial* law; and some few such we have under the Gospel.

Secondly, Actions are made *duties* or *sins*, as they are agreeable or opposite to the divine *moral* laws: that is, Those which are of an indispensable and eternal obligation, which were first written in men's hearts, and originally dictates of humane nature, or necessary conclusions and deductions from them.

By the way, I take it for granted (and I cannot imagine how any *considerative*, supposing he be not a very *debauch'd* person, can in the least doubt it,) that there are *first principles* in *morals*, as well as in the *mathematicks*, *metaphysicks*, &c. I mean such as are self-evident, and therefore not capable of being properly demonstrated; as being no less knowable and easily assented to, than any proposition that may be brought for the proof of them.

Now the *holiness* we are describing is such, as engageth to the performance of the *former sort of duties*, and forbearance of the *former sort of sins*, for this reason *primarily*, because it pleaseth Almighty God to command the one, and forbid the other: which reason is founded upon this certain principle; *That it is most highly becoming all reasonable creatures to obey God in every thing*; and *as much disbecoming them, in any thing to disobey him*. And secondarily, upon the account of the reasons (if they are known) for which God made those laws. And the reasons of the *positive* laws contained in the Gospel are declared, of which I know not above three that are *purely* so, *viz.* That of going to God by Christ, and the institutions of *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*.

Again, This *holiness* is such as engageth to the performance of the *duties*, and forbearance of the *sins* of the *second kind*; not merely because it is the divine pleasure to publish commands of *those*, and prohibitions of *these*; but also, and especially, for the *reasons*, which moved God to make those publications: namely, because *those* are good in *themselves*, and infinitely becoming creatures indued with understanding and liberty of will; and *these* are no less evil in *their own nature*, and unworthy of them.

That man that would forbear, gratefully to acknowledge his obligations to God, or to do to his neighbour as he would that he should do to him, &c. on the one hand; and would not stick at dishonouring his Maker, or abusing his fellow creatures in any kind, &c. on the other; if there were no *written law* of God for the former, and against the latter; doth not *those duties*, nor forbears *these sins*, by virtue of an holy nature that informs and acts him; but is induced thereunto by a mere *animal* principle, and because it is his *interest* so to do. And the reason is clear, because no one that doth thus, only in regard of the *written precepts* and prohibitions of the divine Majesty, doth so out of respect to them, as *such*, but as they have *promises*, but especially *threatnings* annexed to them: for to be sure, he that performs the one, and forbears the other from any lovely notion he hath of *obedience*, and any

hateful one he hath conceived of *disobedience*, will also make conscience of *those* and the like duties, in regard of the goodness, becomingness, and excellency he discerns in *them*; and will abstain from *these* and the like sins, because of the intrinsick evil, turpitude, and deformity he apprehends in *them:* for *those* are no whit less manifestly lovely, and worthy of mankind, than is *obedience* to the divine will, considered in an abstracted notion; nor *these* less apparently vile and abominable than is *disobedience*. For, that very reason, that makes it an intolerable thing to disobey a law of God, (*viz.* because it is highly *unjust* so to do) makes it so also to commit the forementioned, and such like sins; and so on the contrary: now this proposition, *That it is a base thing to do unjustly*, is one of those which I call *first principles*; than which there is nothing mankind doth more naturally assent to: and those sins, with many other, are alike plain instances and expressions of that shameful vice *injustice*, though not of an equal *degree* of it.

The sum of what we have said in this account of the nature of *true holiness* is this, *viz. That it is such a disposition and temper of the inward man, as powerfully inclines it carefully to regard and attend to, affectionately to embrace and adhere to, to be actuated by, and under the government of all those good practical principles that are made known either by* revelation, nature, *or the use of* reason.

Now though nothing is more natural to the souls of men, considered in their pure essentials, and as they came out of their Creator's hands, than this most excellent temper; yet by their apostasie from God, and sinking into brutish sensuality, did they sadly dispossess themselves of it, and so became like the beasts which perish. But it pleased the infinite goodness of the divine Majesty not to give us over so; for when we had destroyed our selves, in him was our help found. He greatly concerned himself for the recovery of fallen mankind by various means and methods, and when the world was at the very worst, did he make use of the most sovereign and effectual remedy. *He, who at sundry times, and in diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, did in these last days send his dearly beloved and only begotten Son to us.* And to prove that the great errand he came upon was the effecting of our deliverance out of that sinful state we had brought our selves into, and the putting us again into possession of that holiness which we had lost, is now our next business.

CHAP. II.

A general Demonstration that the Holiness described is the Design of Christianity, by a Climax of seven Particulars.

IN the first place, in order to the proof of this, it is worthy our observation, that St. *John* the *Baptist* being sent to prepare the way before our Saviour, did so, by teaching the doctrine of *repentance*, and baptizing

baptizing men thereunto: and that we no sooner read of his appearing in publick, and entring upon his office of *harbinger* or *forerunner*, but we find him preaching this doctrine, and making use of the news of the *Messiah*'s approach, as a motive to persuade them to that duty. *Matth.* iii. 1, 2. *In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying: Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And this was that which the angel foretold *Zacharias* he should do, when he gave him the first notice that he should be the father of such a son. *Luke* i. 16, 17. *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him in the power, and spirit of* Elias, *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord:* that is, He shall make way for the *Messiah* with the same zeal against all wickedness, as was expressed by *Elias*; and likewise with an immediate commission from heaven, as *he* had, in order to the working of a general reformation among the *Jews*. This sheweth that Christ's great errand to us, was our thorow conversion from sin, and the making us holy; seeing that the only preparation necessary for the entertainment of him, consisted in having this work begun in us.

Secondly, Upon the first news of Christ's near approach, brought by *Malachi* the last of the Prophets, this is expressed by him as that which should be his grand business when he was come, *Mal.* iii. 1, 2, 3. *The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in* (or, *have a longing expectation of*). *Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts: but who may abide the day of his coming? Or, who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner, and purifier of silver; and he shall purifie the sons of* Levi, *and purge them as gold is purged, &c.*

Thirdly, Immediately after his conception in the womb of the blessed Virgin, this was foretold to *Joseph* concerning him by an angel, *Matt.* i. 21. *She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name* Jesus; *for he shall save his people from their sins.* This blessing of making men *holy* was so much the design of Christ's coming, that he had his very name from it. Observe the words are, *He shall save his people from their sins*; not from the *punishment* of them: and (as will fully appear hereafter) that is the *primary* sense of them, which is most plainly expressed in them: that he shall save his people from the *punishment of sin* is a true sense too, but it is *secondary* and implied only; as this *latter* is the never-failing and necessary consequent of the *former* salvation.

This again was foretold by *Zacharias*, betwixt his conception and birth. He saith, *Luke* i. 72, &c. *That God performed his covenant in sending Christ*; which covenant consists in this, *That he would grant us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

Fourthly, We likewise find this expressed by *Simeon*, immediately upon his birth, *Luke* ii. 32. where having called him God's *salvation*, which he had prepared before the face of all people, he adds that, *He is a light to lighten the Gentiles:* whereby is meant, that he should bring

them into the way of righteousness and true holiness. *Holiness* is not in a few places expressed by the metaphor of *light*, and *wickedness* by that of *darkness: turning from darkness to light* is explained by (*a*) *Turning from the power of Satan unto God.* And the following clause, *viz. And the glory of thy people Israel*, signifieth the same thing: namely, that in the place of their outward and ceremonial observances, called by the Apostle (*b*) *Beggarly Elements*, he should bring in among them a far more noble, *viz.* an inward, substantial and everlasting righteousness; and by abrogating *that*, and establishing only *this* righteousness, he should enlarge their Church, an accession of the Gentiles being by that means made unto it.

Fifthly, This is expressed by St. *John* the Baptist, immediately before our Saviour's solemn entrance upon his office, as the business he was undertaking, *Matth.* iii. 11, 12. *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance* (that is, especially from the more plain and confessed exorbitances); *but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire* (which will take away those stains and pollutions, that *water* cannot): *whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor.*

Sixthly, Again, after our Saviour's entrance upon his office, he himself declared, that *he came to call sinners to repentance:* and that he was so far from coming to destroy the law and the Prophets, that he came (*c*) πληρῶσαι, to fulfill, or perfect them, that is, by giving more and higher instances of moral duties than were before expressly given: and he tells the *Jews* presently after, that *except their righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees* (that is, unless it be above their partial and merely external righteousness) *they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And he abundantly made it appear, (as will be quickly shewn) that the reformation of men's lives, and purification of their natures, were the great business that he designed.

Lastly, This was frequently asserted, after he forsook the world, by the Apostles he left behind him. St. *Peter* told his country-men, *Acts* iii. 26. That, as God sent Christ *to bless* them, so the *blessing* designed them by him, consisted *in turning them from their iniquities. To you first* (saith he) *God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, by turning every one of you from his iniquities.* Again, *Acts* v. 31. the same Apostle, with others, saith that, *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Repentance* first, and then *forgiveness.* St. *John* tells us, 1 *Epist.* iii. 8. that, *for this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* And St. *Paul* called the gospel of Christ, 1 Tim. vi. 3. *The mystery of godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *The doctrine that is according to godliness.* And gives us to understand that, that which the grace of God which brings salvation teacheth, is, *That denying ungodliness, and all worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world*, Tit. ii. 12.

(*a*) Acts xxvi. (*b*) Gal. iv. 9.

(*c*) Mat. v. 17. or πληρῶσαι, may signifie *fully to preach*, as Rom. xv. 19. and Col. i. 25.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

A particular Demonstration that Holiness is the only Design of the Precepts of the Gospel. And that they require, 1. *The most extensive Holiness,* 2. *The most Intensive. An Objection answered.*

BUT to give a more particular proof of what we have undertaken.

First, It is most apparent, that *holiness* is the design, the only design of the *Christian precepts*, and that this is the mark which they are wholly levelled at. What the (*d*) Apostle spake of the *Jewish*, may be much more said of the *Christian* law, that *It is holy, just, and good.* For as *Clemens Alexandrinus* in his *Pædagogus* saith, ἐν Χριστῷ νηπιότης τελείωσίς ἐστιν, &c. *Even infant Christianity is perfection, compared with the law*, or *the Mosaical dispensation.*

There is no *affirmative* precept in the Gospel, but it either commands *holiness* in the general, or one or more particular virtues, or habits of holiness, or some essential act or acts of it; or means and helps to the acquiring, maintaining, or encrease of it. Such as *hearing* and *reading the word, prayer, meditation, good conference, watchfulness against temptations, avoiding occasions of evil, &c.*

And there is no *negative precept*, but doth forbid the contrary to some one or more of those duties; but doth forbid some thing or other that doth tend either directly or indirectly, immediately or mediately, in its own nature, or by reason of some circumstance, to the depraving of humane nature, and rendring us *perfectly wicked*, or in some degree or other *less holy.*

To make this appear by going over the several *precepts* contained in the Gospel, would be a work of too much time; but whosoever, as he reads them, shall duly consider each of them, cannot be to seek for satisfaction, concerning the truth of what I have now said; and I dare undertake he will readily acknowledge, that there is nothing that is not upon its own, or some one or other account, greatly becoming us, and perfective of humane nature, in the whole Gospel *commanded:* and that there is not any thing in it self, and in all respects innocent, there *forbidden.* This can be by no means said concerning the *precepts* of the law of *Moses*; but that it may concerning those of the Gospel, is absolutely certain.

But my whole discourse upon this present argument shall be confined to these two heads: namely to shew, *That the Christian precepts require the most* extensive, *and most* intensive *holiness*; that is, exactly such a holiness as hath been described.

First, *They require the most extensive holiness*, not only towards God, but also towards our neighbour, and our selves. In the forecited place, *Tit.* ii. 12. St. *Paul* puts all these together, under the phrases of *living soberly, righteously, and godlily*, as making up that *holiness* which *the grace of God, that brings salvation*, teacheth. The *precepts* of our Saviour command

(*d*) Rom. vii.

command us not only *to give unto* God *the things that are* God's, *but also to* Cæsar *the things that are* Cæsar's: not only to obey *God* in all things, but to be *subject* likewise *to every ordinance of* man *for the Lord's sake*; that is, to every ordinance of man that doth not contradict the law of God: not only *to fear* God, but also *to honour* the king, and to obey our *spiritual* governours, *which watch for our souls*, &c. and to behave ourselves towards all persons suitably to the relations we stand in to them: *Wives to submit themselves to their own husbands, as unto the Lord: husbands to love their wives even as Christ loved the church: children to obey their parents in the Lord; and fathers not to provoke their children to wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: servants to be obedient to their masters, with singleness of heart as unto Christ, &c. and masters to do the same things unto them, forbearing threatning*, or a harsh behaviour towards them, (*e*) *knowing that they have a master in heaven*, with whom is no respect of persons. We are commanded to love not our *relations*, or our *friends* only, but also *all mankind*; and to do good to *all* without exception, though especially to the *household of faith*; to good men. Nay our Saviour hath laid a strict charge upon us, not to exclude our malicious (*f*) *enemies* from our *love* (that is, *of benevolence*) but to pray for them that despitefully use us, and to bless those that curse us. Which law, as harshly as it sounds to carnal persons, they themselves cannot but acknowledge that what it enjoyneth, is heroically and highly virtuous.

Secondly, *The Christian precepts require the most intensive holiness*; not only *negative* but *positive*, as was now intimated; that is, not only the forbearance of what is evil, but the performance also of what is good: not only holiness of *actions* and *words*, but likewise of *affections* and *thoughts*: the worship of God with the spirit, as well as with the outward man; a holy frame and habit of mind, as well as a holy life. They forbid cherishing sin in the *heart*, as well as practising it in the *conversation*. They make *lusting after a woman* adultery, as well as the *gross* act of uncleanness. They make *malice* murther, as well as *killing*; they forbid coveting no less than defrauding; and being in love with this world's goods, as much as getting them by unlawful means.

And I shall digress so far as to say, That there is infinite reason that *thoughts* and the inward workings of men's souls should be restrained by laws, upon these two accounts.

First, Because *irregular thoughts* and *affections* are the immediate depravers of men's natures; and therefore it is as necessary in order to the design of making men *holy*, that *these* should be forbidden, as that evil *actions* and *words* should. But suppose this were otherwise; yet

Secondly, Laws made against evil *words* and *actions* would signifie very little, if men were left at liberty as to their *thoughts* and *affections*. It would be to very little purpose to forbid men to *do* evil, if they might *think* and *love* it: for where the sparks of sin are kept glowing in the *soul*, how can they be kept from breaking out into a flame in the *life*? From the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, and the hands act.

But to proceed, *The precepts* of the Gospel command us not only to perform

(*e*) Eph. vi. (*f*) Matt. v.

perform good actions, but also to do them after a right manner, with right ends, &c. or in one word, from good principles. Whatsoever we do, (*g*) *to do it heartily, as to the Lord and not as to men.* To be (*h*) *fervent in spirit* in our service of God. To do all to the (*i*) *glory of God.* To be holy (*k*) *as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation.* (*l*) *To be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect:* Which *precepts* shew that we ought to imitate him, not only in the *matter* of our actions, but likewise in the *qualifications* of them: among which, that which I said is essential to true holiness, is a principal one: namely, To do good actions for those reasons which moved God to enjoyn them, and, I add, which make it pleasing to him to perform them himself, *viz.* because they are either in themselves and upon their own account, excellent, worthy and most fit to be done, or are made so to be by some circumstance.

Our whole duty to God and our neighbour (as our Saviour hath told us) is comprehended in the *love* of them: and the *love of God* required by him is a most *intense* love: we are commanded to love him (*m*) *with all the heart and soul, mind and strength*; and *that* of our neighbour which he hath made our duty, is such, as for the *kind* of it, is like the love which we bear to our selves; such as will not permit us to wrong him in his (*n*) *good name*, any more than in his *estate* or *person*; such as will not allow us *rashly* to *speak*, or so much as *think* ill of him; such as will cause us to put the best constructions on those actions of his that are capable of various interpretations, &c. And for the (*o*) *degree*, such as will make us willing to lay down our very (*p*) *lives* for him, that is, for the promoting of his eternal happiness.

To sum up all together, We are commanded to (*q*) *add to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.* To behave our selves in all respects towards our Creator as becometh his creatures, and those which are under unspeakable obligations to him: towards one another, as becometh those that are indued with the same common nature, and according to the diverse relations, engagements and other circumstances we stand in each to other; and towards our selves according as the dignity of our nature requires we should. In short, (*r*) *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, whatsoever things have virtue and praise in them*, are the objects of the Christian precepts, and by them recommended to us. Let any one read but our Saviour's incomparable sermon upon the mount, the twelfth to the *Romans*, and the third chapter of the epistle to the *Colossians*, and well consider them, and it will be strange should he find it difficult to assent to the truth of that proposition.

Even *Trypho* himself, in the dialogue betwixt *Justin Martyr* and him, confessed, that the *precepts* contained in the book called the *Gospel* are

θαυμασὰ

(*g*) Col. iii. 23. (*h*) Rom. xii. 11. (*i*) 1 Cor. 10. 31.
(*k*) 1 Pet. i. 15. (*l*) Mat. v. 48. (*m*) Mat. xix. 19.
(*n*) Tit. iii. 2. (*o*) 1 Cor. xiii. 5. (*p*) 1 John iii. 16.
(*q*) 2 Pet. 1. (*r*) Phil. 4.

θαυμαστὰ καὶ μεγάλα, *great and admirable.* He saith indeed, *that they are so admirable, as that he suspected them not to be by human nature observable;* but in that he spake not unlike to himself, that is, a prejudiced and carnal *Jew.*

If it be now objected, that notwithstanding what hath been said concerning the *Christian precepts* recommending the most elevated virtue to be practised by us, it is acknowledged by all sober Christians, that they are not to be understood in so high a sense as to require of us indefective and unspotted holiness, or at least that our Saviour will accept of and reward that holiness which is far short of *perfect*; and therefore he can be no such great friend to it, as hath been affirmed: the answer is very easy and obvious, *viz.* That our Saviour's not rigidly exacting such a degree of holiness as amounts to *perfection*, proceeds from hence, that the attainment of it is in this state impossible to us; and therefore it is not to be attributed to his liking or allowance of the least sin, but to his special grace and good will to fallen mankind: Nay, moreover, it proceeds from his passionate desire that we may be as pure and holy, as our unhappy circumstances will admit; he well knowing, that should he declare that nothing short of *perfection* shall be accepted at our hands, he would make us desperate, and take the most effectual course to cause us to give over all thoughts of becoming better, nay, and to let the reins loose unto all ungodliness. But yet nothing short of *sincerity*, and *diligent, serious endeavours to abstain from all sin*, will be admitted by him in order to our being made the objects of his grace and favour: and as for *wilful* and *presumptuous* sins, of what kind soever, he makes no allowances for *them*, but hath by himself and his ministers declared very frequently, that they shall not be pardoned, without our reformation. And, lastly, notwithstanding the allowances and abatements that in tender compassion to us he is pleased to make us, no less than our *absolutely perfect* holiness is designed by him, though not to be effected in *this*, yet in the *other* world.

CHAP. IV.

That Holiness is the only Design of the Promises of the Gospel, shewed in Two Particulars: and of the Threatenings therein contained.

SECONDLY, the *promises* and *threatenings* of the Gospel have most apparently the promoting of *Holiness* for their only design.

First, The *promises*, it is plain, have. This St. *Peter* assureth us, 2 *Epist. chap.* 1. *ver.* 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* And St. *Paul* doth more than intimate the same, in 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having* (saith he) *those promises, dearly beloved,* (*viz.* those which the foregoing chapter concludes with) *let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Again, *Rom.* 12. 1.

I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be ye not conformed to this present world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, &c.

1. We always find these *promises* either limited to *holy* persons, or made use of as encouragements and exciting motives to *holiness*. The Apostle tells us, that it is *godliness* which hath the (*s*) *promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*. The promise of the beatifical vision is made to *the pure in heart*. (*t*) *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. That of the kingdom of heaven to the (*u*) *poor in spirit*, or those that are of humble and lowly tempers. The promise of obtaining mercy to (*x*) *the merciful*. That of inheriting the earth (of temporal felicity) to the (*y*) *meek*, or such as live in obedience to government, &c. That of eternal life to those that (*z*) *patiently continue in well-doing*. That of sitting with Christ on his throne, to those that *overcome*, (*a*) that is, that mortifie their lusts and corrupt affections. The promise of a crown of life is used as a motive to persuade to (*b*) *faithfulness to the death*. But to what purpose do I multiply instances, when as there is not a particular *promise* throughout the whole Gospel, but it is expressed, or plainly intimated, that its performance depends upon some duty of *holiness* to be on our parts first performed, or at least heartily endeavoured. And whereas the promises of pardon, and of eternal life are very frequently made to *believing*, there is nothing more evidently declared than that this *faith* is such as purifieth the heart, and is productive of good works.

2. Nay the *nature of these promises* is such, as is of it self sufficient to satisfie us, *that holiness is the design of them.*

1. This is manifestly true concerning the *principal promises*, or those which relate to the other life. They may be reduced to these three heads; that *of the holy spirit*; *of remission of sin*; and *of eternal happiness in the enjoyment of God.*

Now for the first of these, *viz. The promise of the spirit*, that is it to which we are beholden for grace and assistance in the great work of subduing sin, and acquiring the habit of holiness; and this is the very business for the sake of which that promise is made to us.

And for the second and third, they are such as none but holy souls are capable of. That none but such are capable of having the *guilt* of their sins removed, and of being freed from the displeasure and wrath of God, is self-evident; for the *guilt of sin* must needs remain while its *power* continues; these two are inseparately from each other: sin is so loathsome and filthy a thing (as shall hereafter be shewn) that it is perfectly impossible that the blood of Christ it self should render a sinner lovely, or not odious, in the sight of God, any otherwise than by washing away the pollution of it. And nothing is more apparent, than that holy souls alone are in a capacity of the happiness that consists in the enjoyment of God in the other world; than that, as without holiness no man *shall see* the Lord, (as saith the author to the *Hebrews*) so without it none *can see* him: for the full and complete participation of God, which

(*s*) 1 Tim. 4. (*t*) Mat. 5. 8. (*u*) Verse 3.
(*x*) Verse 7. (*y*) Verse 5. (*z*) Rom. 2. 7.
(*a*) Rev. 3. 21. (*b*) Chap. 2. 10.

which our Saviour promiseth his disciples and faithful followers, ariseth out of the likeness and conformity of men's souls to him: but there is such a perfect unlikeness and contrariety in impure and polluted souls to the infinitely holy God, that it is impossible there should be any communications from him to them, any friendly agreement and complacency between him and them. *He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither can evil dwell with him.* Psal. 5. 4. *What communion hath light with darkness?* saith the apostle, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. But vicious and unholy souls are full of darkness, whereas God is pure splendid light, and in him is no darkness at all. The *Platonists* would not admit that any man is capable of being acquainted with *divine* things, that is not purged from that which they called ἀθυμία, and ἀλογία, *remissness of mind and brutish passions.* How utterly impossible then is it, that such as are not so, should be acquainted with *divinity* it self! *Hierocles* saith, ὥσπερ ὀφθαλμῷ λημώσῃ, &c. *As a bleer-eye cannot look upon* σφόδρα φωτειναὶ *things very bright and shining, so a soul unpossessed of virtue is unable to behold the beauty of truth:* how unable then is such a soul to behold the beauty of God himself, to see him as he is, and be happy in the sight of him? Those eyes which have continually beheld vanity (as saith an excellent late writer of our own) would be dazzled, not delighted, with the beatifick vision. (*c*) *Thanks be to God* (saith the apostle) *who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.* Those can by no means partake of it, that are not by holiness made *meet* and disposed for it. What happiness can we find in the enjoyment of God, when he is of a perfectly contrary nature to our own? and moreover, how can we then enjoy him? There must be in us a likeness to him, or *we cannot see him as he is;* for St. *John* proves, that *when he appeareth, we shall be like him,* by this agreement. It was one of the maxims of the excellent *Socrates.* * *It is unlawful for an impure nature to touch pure divinity.* Now this being *the happiness* promised in the Gospel, we easily learn from the consideration of the *nature* of it (it being not at all gross and sensual, but purely spiritual) what is the design of those *promises* that contain it. At the first hearing of them, though they should sound (as they do not) like *absolute* ones, we may be certain that holiness, and sincere endeavours after a participation of a divine nature, must necessarily be tacit conditions of them, as without which our souls cannot possibly be qualified and put into an apt disposition for them.

2. As the *promises* which concern *the other life* are such as none but *holy* souls are *capable* of: so those that only relate to *this life* are such as none but such souls will be *contented* with. They are only *necessaries* which the Gospel gives us an assurance of, and such things as may be a help to the exercise of *virtue* and *holiness*; not *superfluities*, and such as serve to gratifie liquorish appetites. So we are to understand that of our Saviour, *Mat.* 6. 3. *First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you:* the words foregoing shew, that by [*all these things*] we are only to understand *meat, drink, and clothes.* The temporal blessings that Christ engageth himself to

(*c*) Col. i. 12.

* Μὴ καθαρὸν καθαρῷ ἁφάπτεσθαι μὴ ὃ θεμιτὸν ἦ.

bestow upon his disciples, are such alone as tend to answer *moderate* desires, not to satisfie *inordinate* cravings: in short, they are only such as are needful to keep their bodies in such a state as that they may be meet habitations and instruments of their souls, so long as it shall be fit for them to continue in them.

Secondly, and as for the *threatenings* of the Gospel, which are most terrible and dismal, that they have the same design that the *promises* have, is out of question: for they are never used to scare men from any thing but what tends to pollute and debauch their souls: and the end of them is every where to excite us effectually to diligence and industry in the pursuit of real righteousness and substantial holiness.

(*d*) *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven* in the Gospel, *against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men:* such as disbelieving and disobeying Christ's Gospel, in the *general*; and *particularly* such as (*e*) *idolatry, adultery, fornication* and *uncleanness* of all sorts, *theft, covetousness, drunkenness, reviling, wrath, contemptuous behaviour, implacability, unmercifulness, illiberality, malice, censoriousness, lying, pride, hypocrisie, rebellion* and *disobedience to governours*, &c. And therefore are the committers of these and such like sins threatened, that so those, which from the consideration of their vile nature and uglineſs will not be withdrawn from them, may from a principle of self-preservation be afraid of them; and our Saviour is infinitely good to us in his terrifying *threatenings*, as well as in his alluring *promises*. For (as *Clem. Alex.* in his *Pædagogus*, saith) *his threatenings proceed not from anger, but from great good will; and he therefore threateneth punishment, that sinners being thereby scared into reformation, may by that means prevent their being punished. He doth not*, (as he proceeds) *like a serpent, bite before he giveth warning.* And therefore only doth he give warning, that he may not bite.

CHAP. V.

That the promoting of Holiness was the Design of our Saviour's whole Life and Conversation among Men; both of his Discourses and Actions. And that he was an eminent Example of all the Parts of Virtue, viz. Of the greatest Freedom, Affability and Courtesie; the greatest Candor and Ingenuity: the most marvellous gentleness and meekness: the deepest Humility: the greatest contempt of the World: the most perfect Contentation: the most wonderful Charity and tenderest Compassion: stupendous Patience, and Submission to the Divine Will: the most passionate Love of God, and devoutest temper of Mind towards him: mighty Confidence and Trust in God. An Objection answered: the most admirable Prudence.

THIRDLY, The promoting of holiness was *the* design of our Saviour's *whole life, and conversation among men.* All his discourses that are on record carried on this great business: not only

(*d*) Rom. i. 18.

(*e*) 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Mat. v. 22. Mat. xi. 26. chap. xviii. 28. chap. xxv. 42. 1 John iii. 15. Mat. vii. 1. Rev. xxi. 27. Jam. iv. 6. Mat. xxiii. 13. Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

only his *sermons*, but likewise those which are less solemn, and that *occasionally*, and as it were *by the bye* dropt from him. There is not a *parable* he uttered, but something highly conducing to the instilling of virtue into those to whom he directed it, was the *moral* of it: and all advantages and occasions he greedily embraced for the infusing of true piety and holiness into the souls of men.

To give a few instances: when it was told him that his mother and brethren sought for him, he took that opportunity to tell them, that *whosoever will do the will of God, the same is his brother, sister, and mother*, *Mark* 3. 35. When he observed a reasoning among the disciples, which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of God, he took occasion from thence to preach to them the necessity of the grace of *humility* and *becoming as little children*, of *self denial*, *mortification of their most beloved lusts*, and to teach them several other very excellent lessons, *Matt.* 18. in the beginning. Upon a certain woman's saying to him, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck*; he minded his hearers of the blessedness of *obedient* persons; *Yea rather* (said he) *are they blessed that hear the word of God, and keep it*, *Luke* 11. 28. Upon *Martha's* desiring him to command her sister to help her in serving, he reproved her over-solicitousness about the affairs of this life, and put her in mind of the *one thing needful*, *Luke* 10. 41. From a Pharisee's marvelling that he washed not before dinner, he took an advantage to reprove their superstition, hypocrisies, partial righteousness, pride, and several other immoralities, *Luke* 11. 38. *&c.* From a person's desiring him to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance with him, he took an opportunity to discourse against *covetousness*, and to dissuade from setting the heart upon earthly riches, from solicitousness and carking carefulness, and to exhort to several most weighty and important duties, *Luke* 12. 15, &c. Upon some men's talking of the lamentable disaster that befell the *Galileans*, he took occasion to give a caution again *rash judging*, and to preach to them the absolute necessity of *repentance*, as that without which they should all perish, *Luke* 13. begin. Upon his observing how that at a feast they chose the uppermost rooms, he laid hold of that opportunity to teach the virtue of *humility*, *Luke* 14. 7. And in the same chapter he took the advantage that was offered him by other passages for the instilling of diverse other profitable instructions. And you may find in the four Evangelists abundance of observations of this nature.

And as it was the business of all his *discourses* to teach virtue, so was it also of all his *actions*: he preach'd *holiness* to men's *eyes* no less than to their ears, by giving them the most admirable example in his own person of all the parts of it. His whole life was one continued lecture of the most excellent *morals*, the most sublime and exact virtue.

For instance; he was a person of the greatest *freedom*, *affability*, and *courtesie*, there was nothing in his conversation that was at all austere, crabbed or unpleasant. Though he was always *serious*, yet was he never *sowre*, sullenly grave, morose or cynical; but of a marvellously conversable, sociable and benign temper. Those who had checks from his disciples, as rude and troublesome, were never accused by him for being so, but were most kindly listened to, and lovingly received: even

little children, as unwelcome as they were to them, were tenderly embraced, and blessed by him. He never blamed any for interrupting him in his discourses, or other business: nor was put into the least chafe by their so doing, but ever patiently heard them, and sent none of them from him (supposing they had no ill design in coming to him) without satisfaction. When he was invited to men's tables (as little as their chear could tempt him) he readily went; nor did he esteem it as disbecoming his gravity to make one at a marriage-feast; nor to contribute to it *himself* neither. He did not think himself *defiled* by bad company, nor baulked the society of publicans and sinners themselves, (as loathsome as they were to *worse* men, the *Pharisees*) but freely in order to the reforming of them sate down, when there was occasion, and conversed with them. His first entertainment of the woman of *Canaan*, as uncivil as it might seem, was nothing less than so; for the unkind and contemptuous language he gave her, though it was but the same which the *Jews* always bestowed upon those people, proceeded not from no *contempt* of her; nor was it designed, as the event shewed, in the least to discourage her, but on the contrary, to give her occasion to shew the *greatness* of her *faith*, in the answer she returned to it. The ever and anon infirm, imprudent and impertinent talk of his disciples, and others, could not at any time put him out of his good temper, but only gave him an opportunity of imparting to them seasonable instructions and wise counsels.

The *candour* also and *ingenuity* of his spirit did to great admiration discover it self: whereof take this one instance. Whereas he (as was said) forbad censorious judging of other men; and commanded, consequently, to put the best constructions upon those actions of others that are capable of various interpretations, he hath given us no small encouragement so to do, by his behaviour towards those three disciples, whom he could not perswade for a little while to forbear sleeping, no not in his *agony*; as great obligations as he had laid upon them, to do any thing he should please to desire of them. Their *sleeping* at such a time seemed a certain sign of their being very much unconcerned for their blessed Lord, and of great coolness of affection to him; especially he having (I say) before desired them to *watch* with him, and given them the reason why he did so: yet for all this would he impute it to no worse a cause than mere infirmity, nor entertain any ill opinion of them upon that account; and when they themselves had nothing to say to excuse their fault, he makes this apology himself for them: *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*: nay, though, for all this, and notwithstanding that friendly expostulation of his with *Peter*, [*Couldest thou not watch with me one hour?*] they fell asleep again, yet did he not at his last return to them pass any censure upon them, but carried it towards them as he was wont to do.

And the *gentleness* and *meekness* of his disposition was very marvellous: when *James* and *John*, in a great heat, would have perswaded him to call for fire from heaven, after the example of *Elias*, to consume the *Samaritans* for their inhospitable and barbarous refusal to give him entertainment, he rebuked them immediately for that revengeful motion, and gave them this reply; *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*; *for*

for the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them, Luke 9. 55. and so silently went his ways, without giving them so much as a lash of his tongue for so rude an affront. Never had any one so strong provocation to wrath and revenge, as the blessed *Jesus*; but never were either so undiscernible in any as they were in him. In his carriage indeed towards the Pharisees he might seem to some to be once or twice transported with a fit of ordinary passion, but it would not have become the zeal he had for God and true goodness, to behave himself otherwise towards such monstrously immoral wretches and most hatefully conceited and proud hypocrites. Nor was his overturning the tables of the money-changers, or whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple, any other than a very befitting and seemly expression of his just displeasure against those sacrilegious and prophane people. But he was never so concerned for himself, for his own reputation, or ought else that belonged to him, as to be put in the least heat by all the ignominious language that was from time to time given him, and the vile reproaches and unsufferable abuses that were heap'd upon him. When he was accosted with a never-to-be-parallell'd impudence by his old disciple *Judas*, in the front of an armed multitude, who could have forborn to receive such a villainous and intolerably base traytor with the most emphatical expressions of an exasperated and enraged mind? But with what wonderful *mildness* was that monster of ingratitude and dissimulation treated by our dear Lord! the worst words he bestowed upon him being these, *Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?* Nor did he more angrily bespeak the wicked followers than he did their leader, when they rudely assaulted and apprehended him. And so far was he from revenging himself upon them, as able as he was to do it effectually; and notwithstanding (as he gave them to understand) that he could, if he listed, have no fewer than twelve legions of angels imployed in his service, that he wrought a miracle for the healing of the wound that one of them received from the sword of *Peter*; and withal, charged him to put up that weapon.

Nor was it ever in the power either of the calumniating and black tongues, or rude and cruel hands, of his bitterest enemies to draw from him so much as a reviling or fierce word. But of so rarely moderate a temper and serene spirit was he, that (as S. *Peter* saith,) *(f) When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. (g) He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting. (h) He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.* And thus hath he taught us by the most excellent example to obey those *precepts* of his whereby the practice of that virtue of *meekness* and sedateness of spirit towards injurious persons is injoyned on us.

Nor was his *meekness* less to be parallell'd or more observable than his great *humility*; from whence indeed that proceeded, and was of this no small expression. And especially considering his high descent, most transcendent perfections and infinite worth, it was impossible he should have

(*f*) 1 Pet. ii. 23. (*g*) Isai. l. 6. (*h*) Isai. liii. 7.

have been so *meek* as to put up such contemptuous usage and inexpressibly provoking affronts as he did, if his *humility* were not equal to his other excellencies; if he had not been most lowly minded, and of a profoundly submiss spirit. God only had the glory of his mighty works, he would not ascribe to *himself* the least. *The father*, saith he, *that dwelleth in me, he doth the works*, John xiv. 10. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the father do: for whatsoever things he doth, these doth the son likewise*, John v. 19. *I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the father which hath sent me*, verse 30.— *I do nothing of myself: but as my father hath taught me, I speak these things*, John viii. 28.

Though he was *king of kings, and lord of lords, the prince of the kings of earth*, yet did he hide his greatness, told his disciples that *his kingdom is not of this world*, and chose the condition of a subject and a private man in it: nor would he be persuaded to assume to himself so much authority, as judging but between two persons in a case of civil right did amount unto. In the above-cited place (*Luke* 12. 15.) when one desired him to speak to his brother, that he divide the inheritance with him, he returned him this answer, *Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?* Nay he put himself into the condition, not only of a *private*, but also of a *mean*, a most *despicably mean* person. As he chose to be born of a *mean* woman, in the *meanest* and even *vilest* of places, a stable, where a manger was his cradle, and brute beasts his chamber-fellows; so did he afterwards subject himself to his poor mother, and the carpenter her husband. He was not unacquainted, when he was but a child, with the nobility of his descent, the greatness of his extraction; he even then did well understand whose son he was, and that no less a person was his father than the infinite God of heaven and earth; for said he to *Joseph* and *Mary*, when after a sorrowful search after him they found him in the temple, *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* yet notwithstanding, *he went down with them from Jerusalem, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them*, *Luke* ii. 49, 51. And under *Joseph*, though he knew him to be but his reputed Father (if we may believe * one of the most ancient Fathers) he wrought at his own trade, and, as he saith, τεκτονικὰ ἔργα εἰργαζέτο, did carpentry-work; and particularly busied himself in making ἀροτρὰ καὶ ζυγὰ *ploughs and yokes*.

Again, the persons that he took for his most intimate associates were of no better quality than sorry fishermen, and men of the lowest rank. As for his worldly estate, I cannot say 'twas *mean*, for he had none at all (that is, but what he was beholden to others for.) *The foxes*, said he, *have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where he may lay his head.* And as for *employments*, he thought not himself too good to undertake the *vilest*, even one in comparison of which making *ploughs* and *yokes* was most gentle, *viz. The washing of his disciples feet.* In short, so marvellously humble was this infinitely *great* person, that (as he saith, *Matt.* xx. 28.) *He came not to be ministred unto, but to minister*; and was *in this world as one that serveth*, Luke xxii. 27. and that, *though he was rich, he became poor, that we through his*

* *Justin Martyr.*

his poverty might be rich. (*i*) That, *though he was in the form of God, he thought it no robbery* (or spoil) *to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, *Phil.* ii. 6, 7. And our Saviour hath declared that he was our pattern both in his *meekness* and *humility*; for, *learn* (said he) *of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matth. xi. 29. And therefore did he submit to that meanest office of a *servant* (which was but now mentioned) that we might, from the consideration of his example, not look upon the lowest, whereby we may serve our brethren, as below us: for, after he had washed his Disciples feet, and was sate down again, he said thus to them, *John* xiii. 12. *Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am: If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

Considering what hath been said of his chusing so mean and despicable a condition in this world, I need not spend time in shewing what an example he hath given us of *contempt of it*. Never was any one so dead to its pleasures as he was: nor were ever its glories so trampled on as by our *Saviour*: and that, not as were the carpets of *Plato* by that cynick *Diogenes*, who was truly enough (no question) told by that great philosopher, that he trod under foot the pride of *Plato*, with a greater pride; for he was guilty of no insolent behaviour either towards great men or their greatness, nor of any thing that looked in the least like it. But he gave most eminent demonstrations of the mean opinion he had of popularity and applause among men, of titles of honour, and vast revenues, and that he infinitely despised them in comparison of mental endowments and accomplishments. He confuted the idle fancies of the world concerning these and the like things, and disparaged those vain estimations that are founded upon them, in that he chose to be wholly devoid of them, and in the very other extreme to those which abounded with them: whereby he likewise signified how little evil he apprehended in disesteem, reproach and poverty; which we vain creatures have such frightful conceptions of, and so greatly dread; in that he did not at all matter them, nor in the least concern himself at them.

So great and generous a soul had he, as to be so far from suffering his mind to be at all disquieted with them, that he voluntarily and freely chose them. For it lay in his power to be the *richest* man under heaven, and most to abound with this world's goods, if it had so pleased him; and he could, if he had lifted, have been also the most *popular* person upon earth; could always have kept the credit which for a while he had among the common people, and gained the like among all sorts: for he had infinitely the advantage above all that ever appeared in the world to have raised to himself a most mighty renown, and

(*i*) 2 Cor. viii. 9.

and to be adored by all people. So that the truth of that saying of *Epictetus* [**They are not the things themselves which so affright and scare men, but the false opinions they have conceived of them,*] is greatly confirmed as to the forementioned reputed evils, by our Saviour's practice.

And this blessed person, *chusing* so mean and contemptibly poor a condition of life, I need not tell you that he was perfectly *contented* with it; nor that he was altogether free (though he had many times scarcely from hand to mouth) from thoughtfulness and anxiety of mind, concerning his future maintenance. For as he cautioned his Disciples against *taking thought for their life, what they should eat, what they should drink, and wherewith they should be clothed;* and shewed the folly and sinfulness thereof, as proceeding from distrustfulness of the divine providence, (*Matt.* vi. 25, &c.) so was he so far from being guilty of that fault himself, that he was no less *liberal* than he was *poor*. For when he was provided with a small pittance of victuals, instead of hoarding it up, or being saving of it, he would not think much of spending it upon others whose needs craved it: we read twice of his bestowing the little stock that he and his Disciples had gotten between them, upon the hungry multitude, and of his working a miracle to make it hold out among them.

And how full he was of *charity*, and *tender compassion*, is beyond expression: for as he commended to his disciples, and inculcated upon them nothing more, nor scarcely so much, so in the exercise of no virtue was he more exemplary. We read often of the yerning of his bowels towards miserable mortals, and his pity did always exert itself in acts of mercy. Never did any make application to him for deliverance from the evils that did afflict them, that had not their requests granted them: nor were any more forward to beg relief of any kind of him, than he was to bestow it upon them: nay he frequently made poor creatures the objects of his mercy before it was sought for by them. It was even his whole business to oblige the world by signal kindnesses, and (as shall be farther shewn anon) he continually went up and down doing good either to the bodies or souls of men. Nay his charity was of so large and universal extent, that the wicked and unthankful, and even his bittercst enemies, were (as well as others) very ample partakers of it. Whereas the duty of *blessing those that curse us*, and *praying for those that despitefully use us*, is to our corrupt natures one of the harshest and most difficult of any he hath imposed upon us, he hath taken a course, by the admirable example he hath herein given us, to make it one of the easiest and most pleasant to us. For the deviliish malice that by the vilest of men was expressed towards him, could not in the least imbitter his spirit or harden his heart against them: nor could he be dissuaded by it from persisting in doing good to them: but continued to entreat them to accept of life from him, to grieve at their infidelity, and with tears to bewail their most obstinate perverseness. And lastly, when their inveterate and implacable hatred came to vent it self in the cruellest and most barbarous manner imaginable upon him, did he pray to his father for them; even whilst they were tormenting him, did he beseech him to forgive them; nay,

* Ταραττει τους ανθρωπους ου τα πραγματα αλλα τα περι αυτων δογματα.

nay, and in order thereunto, laid down his very life for them; even for them, I say, that took it from him.

And this gives occasion to discourse something of his most wonderful *patience*, and submission to the will of God, which he gave us in his extreme sufferings an example of. We are exhorted, *Heb.* xii. 1, 2. *to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, &c.* The ignominy that was cast upon him by ungodly creatures, he despised; and as for the excessive tortures felt by him, them he endured: he did not indeed *despise* these also, but neither did he *faint* under them; according as we are forbidden to do, *verse* 5. of the now mentioned chapter, *My son, despise not thou the chastisement of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him.* There were on the one hand no *stoical* rants heard from him, such as that of *Posidonius* in the presence of *Pompey* (when he was afflicted with a fit of the gout, or some such disease,) *viz. nihil agis dolor, &c. O pain, thou art an insignificant thing, I don't matter thee:* For we find that our Saviour had as quick a sense of pain, as have other men; and his agony in the garden did so affect his soul, as to force, θρόμβους αἵματος, *clodders of blood*, through the pores of his body. We read that he was *sore amazed*, and *very heavy*; and he told his Disciples that *his soul was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death:* But yet, on the other hand, notwithstanding the immense weight and most heavy pressure of *grief* his mind suffered under, through his Father's with-holding the wonted influences of his love from him, and the intolerable torments of *body* that he underwent, (though, both in regard of the greatness of his sufferings, and also his most perfect innocence, and therefore non-desert of them, he might have the greatest temptations imaginable to be *impatient*) he never uttered a murmuring or discontented word, nor conceived the least displeasure at the Divine Majesty, or doubted either of his *justice* or *goodness*; but intirely submitted himself to this his severe dispensation of providence, and willingly acquiesced in it. He prayed indeed to his Father, that this bitter *cup, if it were possible, might pass from him*; but it was on this condition, that it might seem good to him. And as so much is implied in those words, [*If it be possible*] so is it expressed, *Luke* xxii. 42. where it is said, *Father, if thou be willing, remove the cup from me:* And it immediately followeth; *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done*; according as he hath, in the absolute form he left us, required us to pray. And again, saith he, *John* xviii. 11. *The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?* And *John* xii. 28. After he had put up the forementioned petition to be delivered from that most dismal hour that was approaching near him, he doth, as it were, *recall* it presently, in these words, *But for this cause came I unto this hour*; and then put up this second, *Father, glorify thy name:* which is plainly as much as if he had said, *Father, as dreadful and terrifying as the thoughts are of my future sufferings, seeing glory will redound to thy self by them, I am not only contented but also desirous to undergo them.*

Celsus having mentioned that celebrated bravado of *Anaxarchus* to the tyrant of *Cyprus*, when he cruelly pounded him in his mortar; and the merry saying of *Epictetus* to his master when he brake his leg,

and

and thereupon scoffingly demanded of the Christians, what saying like to either of those, was uttered by their God in the midst of his sufferings, *Origen* makes this good reply to him, *viz.* That our Saviour's *silence* in the midst of the tortures he endured, shewed greater patience and fortitude of mind, than did all the *sayings* of the Greek philosophers in the like cases: And he adds that those words of Christ, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*, were not only φωνὴ ἐιδεδωκότος, ἐιαρεσκημένου δὲ τοῖς συμβαίνουσιν, *&c. the voice of one that patiently suffered, but also that was well pleased with his sufferings*, and spake his preference of what was appointed for him by the divine providence before his own desires and natural affections.

In the next place, our Saviour gave us the most eminent and noble example of *love to God*, and the devoutest temper of minds towards him. That love of him, *with all the heart and soul, mind and strength* which he commended to us as our duty, did he himself give the highest demonstrations of. His last mentioned *patience*, and perfect submission to the divine pleasure under the most dreadful sufferings, is alone sufficient to convince us that his *love* to his father was most *intense*: for it was utterly impossible that *his will* should be entirely resigned up to *the will of God*, if his *love* of him had not been, *as sincere, so* of the *highest* degree and absolutely perfect. So his heavenly Father might thereby be glorified, he was willing to endure the extremest miseries, that ever were inflicted on any mortal: and indeed his mere well interpreting so severe a providence was a great expression of no small love. And besides, it was (as he told his Disciples) his very (*k*) *meat to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.* As he was heartily well pleased to suffer his will, so he took infinite *content, satisfaction* and *delight* in the *doing* of it. It was to him the most pleasant thing in the whole world to be about his Father's business; and therein he *abounded*, and was indefatigable. All he did was referred by him to the honour of God; and of each of his *glorious works* he gave him the *glory*, and *him* only: which thing was no less an argument of the *ardency* of his *love*, than (as we have said it is) of the *depth* of his *humility*. In all his ways he acknowledged God, and took all occasions to make mention of him, and to speak of his excellent perfections. When the ruler called him but *good* master; which was an epithet, had he been but a mere man, he was infinitely worthy of; as sleight an occasion as this may seem to some, it minded him to speak of *God's goodness*; and he presently replied, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good* (that is originally and from himself) *but God only.* He was much in delightful converse with God, and in prayer to him, and ever and anon retired from all company for that purpose; according as he hath enjoined us to do, *Mat.* vi. 5, 6. And we read *Luke* vi. 12. of his continuing on a mountain a whole night in prayer.

A mighty *confidence* and *trust in God*, as it could not but be an effect of our Saviour's no less *love* of him, so did he give marvellous instances thereof. The storm that put his Disciples into a dreadful consternation, could not terrifie, nor so much as discompose him; no, though he was suddenly awaked out of a sound sleep by their dismal cries. When he was hoisted up into the air by his grand adversary, the

(*k*) John iv.

the devil, and set upon a pinnacle of the temple, and then by abusing scripture solicited to cast himself down; as much as he seemed to be abandoned to his power, and under as great a disadvantage as he was through extreme fasting, his *mind* was as *strong* as his *body weak*, his constancy remained unshaken, his thoughts undisordered, and with an undaunted courage he readily replied to him, *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, *Mat.* iv. 5. Where you have also two other signal instances of the like nature. By all which he shewed that his *trust in God* was so invincibly strong, and his *adherence* to him so inseparably close, that the utmost attempts and fiercest assaults of the devil could have no other effect than to prove them so. Our Saviour could never be prevailed upon to go the least *step* out of God's way, in order to his preservation from the most imminent dangers, so firm was his *faith* in him: and he still doing the things that were pleasing in his sight, he was undoubtedly assured of the continuance of his presence with him. This he hath himself told us, *John* viii. 29. *And he that hath sent me, is with me, the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him.*

So visible and apparent was his *trust in God*, that when he was given up to his adversaries most barbarous rage, they themselves could not but take notice of it, and scoffingly when he hung on the cross (and therefore seemed to be in a desperate condition) did they upbraid him with it: *He trusted in God*, said they, *let him deliver him now if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God*, *Mat.* xxvii. 43. And whereas it hath been objected by some of our Saviour's adversaries, that a little before his death, he expressed very great distrust, if not perfect despair of his Father's love, in that tragical exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* There are those that conceive it may be satisfactorily enough answered, that it is most unreasonable and barbarous to take advantage from words uttered in the very *pangs* of death, accompanied with unsupportable misery; it being not ordinarily supposable that any can be *themselves*, who are in such circumstances; and why the *Man* Jesus, or our Saviour, according to his *humane nature*, should not be under as great disadvantages as others in such a condition, he being, as was said, no less sensible of pain than other men, no reason can be assigned: Yet we stand not however in any necessity of this reply. But I say, secondly, though we should suppose our Saviour to be now as perfectly master of his thoughts as he ever was, these words may not be understood in so harsh a sense; for they were but a repetition of the first verse of the 22d *Psalm*; which does relate not to *David's* case only, but also to the *Messiah*, whom he often personated, and was a type of. The ancient *Jews* themselves did so understand this Psalm. Nor can it be gathered from our Saviour's rehearsal of these words, that he either concluded, or at all doubted, he was utterly rejected and cast off by his Father, but the contrary: for several verses in the forementioned *Psalm* assure us that they are not *there* to be so understood; for *David* doth again and again afterward, not only pray for, but likewise expresseth good *hopes*, nay, and *undoubted assurance* of a gracious deliverance; and praiseth God for it too, as if it were already effected. So that this sad complaint of the

blessed *Jesus*, as it could not be occasioned by the least *distrust*, so it may be more than presumed, to have proceeded from the highest and intensest degree of *love*, which caused in his soul the most pungent and smart sense of his Father's hiding his face, and absenting himself (though but for a while) from him. But the least favourable interpretation it is capable of is no worse than this, *viz.* That our Saviour did thereby express how excessive the misery was which he then felt; especially since the word [*Lama*] doth signify *how* as well as *why*. But lastly, his dying words, and the last he uttered, express his retaining his *confidence in God* (as much as he might seem to be cast off by him) to the very last; which were these, *Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit.*

I will instance in one virtue more wherein our Saviour was also singularly exemplary. Whereas he advised his Disciples to be *wise as serpents*, and *innocent as doves*, they beheld in his conversation a pattern to walk by in following the former as well as the latter part of this advice: nor was the *wisdom of the serpent* less conspicuous in him, than was the *innocence of the dove*. *Prudence* is the first of the primitive virtues, or of those from whence all other have their original. She is the chief governess of humane actions; and those which are performed without her direction, do want a main circumstance that is necessary to give them the denomination of truly virtuous. A rash and heady doing of those actions which are for the matter of them praiseworthy, will render them culpable as to the manner of their performance: and he that hath no regard to *prudence*, though he may do good things, and possibly may sometimes *mean* well, yet he will never merit the commendation of a well-doer. I say therefore that our blessed Saviour, as he hath by his *example*, no less than by his *doctrine*, taught us the exercise of all other virtues, so hath he of this also; and his prudence did wonderfully discover itself through his whole life. As very great as was his zeal for the *glory of God*, and the *good of men*, it was not too strong for his *reason*; it was not a *blind* zeal; but he was ever very careful to give each of his actions their due circumstances. As eagerly as he was bent upon accomplishing the work that he was sent into the world about, he was not for making more haste than good speed. He shewed great *prudence* in his injunctions, his preaching, and discourses: he never urged any duties *unseasonably*, and had a care not to give such severe precepts to his novice Disciples as might discourage and over-burthen them. *(l)* He was not for putting a piece of new cloth into an old garment, or new wine into old bottles.

He very wisely *timed* his discourses; did not preach all his doctrines at once: what was said of the orator *Demosthenes*, cannot be truly affirmed of him, *viz. That he knew what to say well enough, but not what not to say:* for as he well understood what doctrines to preach, so did he also what *not* to preach. *He spake the word unto them as they were able to hear it*, *Mark* iv. 33. And said he, *John* xvi. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* He knew both when to speak, and when to hold his peace; and in whatsoever he said, he considered the *genius*, *temper*, and *capacity* of his auditors. He would

(l) See Matt. ix. 14. to 17.

would *not cast pearls before swine*, as he cautioned his Disciples not to do, for this reason, (*m*) *lest they turn again and rend them.* When he thought good to deliver those doctrines that were likely to exasperate, as that of the calling of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews, &c. he chose to fold them up in parables, unfolding them in private to his Disciples, who were fitly disposed for the receiving of them; and therefore had the favour bestowed upon them *to understand the mysteries of the kingdom*, as he told them.

We find that till he knew his time of suffering was come, he wisely still avoided danger (wherein he properly shewed the wisdom of the serpent) one while by withdrawing himself, *Matt.* xii. 14. and at other times (as was now said) by concealing those doctrines, which he was well aware the unbelieving Jews would be so far from embracing, and making good use of, that they would take occasion from them the more industriously to design his ruin: we read *John* x. 33. to 36. That he would not expressly own himself to be the Son of God in any other sense, than such a one as he might acknowledge with the least danger; and concealed that which he very certainly knew would but confirm them in their opinion of him as a wicked blasphemer, and make him so much the more obnoxious to their spight and rage. So far was he from running headlong upon sufferings, and making himself, through a rash and indiscreet zeal, liable to those that hated him; so far was he from being in love with *persecution*, that he did (as the Apostle exhorted the *Ephesian* Christians to do) ἐξαγοραζεσθαι τον καιρον, *buy out* or *gain time*, *because the days were evil*, and full of danger.

Again, how wisely did our Saviour from time to time *defeat* and render *unsuccessful*, the plots and machinations of the *Pharisees*, and his other enemies against him! We find in *Matt.* xxii. 15. the *Herodians* (or those of the Jews that adhered to the *Roman* authority) and the *Pharisees* (who esteemed it as an usurpation) combining together to entangle him in his talk: and they so ordered their plot, as that they might get an advantage from whatsoever he should say, either to render him obnoxious to *Herod*, and the *Roman* party, or to enrage the most popular and highly esteemed sect of the Jews, the *Pharisees*. In order hereunto they cunningly put to him this question, *viz. Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?* if he should answer that it was, he would make himself liable to the latter mischief; if that it was not, to the former, and the far greater. Now (as is to be seen in the 19, 20, 21. *verses*) our Saviour with such admirable *prudence* contrived his answer, that (*verse* 22.) both factions are said to wonder at it, and to be baffled by it. *When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.* Diverse other instances there are of a like nature; as in *John* viii. 3. to 9. *Matt.* xx. 23. to 27. *Matt.* xxi. 41. to 46, &c.

And thus we have sufficiently and fully enough proved, that it was the whole business of our Saviour's life to make men in all respects *virtuous* and *holy*; and that thereunto were subservient, as his *discourses* with them, so his *actions* likewise, and whole behaviour. *Plus docent exempla quàm præcepta*: examples are the most natural and easie way of teaching,

(*m*) Matth. vii.

teaching, and they are so by reason of mankind's being so greatly addicted to imitation; and, I say, it doth from our past discourse sufficiently appear, that our Saviour's whole conversation was a rare exemplification of all kinds of virtue and true goodness.

CHAP. VI.

That to make Men truly virtuous and holy, was the Design of Christ's unimitable Actions, or mighty Works and Miracles. And these did not only tend to promote it, as they were convincing Arguments that he came forth from God, but were also very proper to effect it in a more immediate manner.

BUT it cannot be amiss if we moreover add, That it was not only the design of our Saviour's *imitable* actions, to teach the world virtue, but also of those which are *not imitable*, *viz.* of his *miracles* and *mighty works*: and that *these* did not only tend to the promoting of that design, as they were convincing and infallible arguments that he came forth from God, but were likewise very proper to effect it in a more *immediate* way. For they were not only *argumentative*, or a proof of the *truth* of *his doctrine*, but also *instructive*, and minded men of their *duty*. Those miracles which he chose to work, were of such a nature, as to be hugely fit to accomplish at one and the same time both these businesses. They were not such as the foolish and carnal Jews expected, that is, *signs from heaven*, that were apt to produce *directly* no other effect than that of pleasing their childish phansies, or striking their senses with admiration and astonishment, by making prodigious and amazing shews and representations before their eyes; but most of them were expressions of the greatest *kindness* and *charity* to mankind. For instance, his healing the sick of all manner of diseases, his making the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, his cleansing the lepers, feeding the hungry, raising the dead, and ejecting of evil spirits out of those that were miserably possessed with them, &c. In *Acts* x. 38. the Apostle expresseth our Saviour's working of miracles, by this phrase [*doing good*] who (saith he) *went up and down doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.* And in his *miracles* did he give instances of great kindness and good will even unto those which did least deserve it: for he made use of his *divine power* for the healing and relief of the *disingenuous* and *unthankful*, *ill natured* and *wicked*, as well as of the *better disposed* and *more worthy* persons: therein imitating his heavenly Farther (as he required us to do) *who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*, *Matth.* v. 45. And the last *miracle* we (I think) read of before his crucifixion, was the cure on one of those his enemies that came with clubs and staves to apprehend him.

And

And the few miracles besides those that consisted in doing *kindnesses* to men (for those we have on record are almost *all* such) were such as by which he gave us an example of other virtues; as particularly of *piety*, *trust in God*, and *zeal for him*. Of his *piety* and *trust in God*, his fasting forty days and forty nights was a great evidence: it was so of his *trust* in him, and constant adhering to him, as by thus doing he put himself by his Father's appointment upon most violent and strong temptations; in conflicting wherewith (as hath been shewn) he came off a most noble conqueror. Of his *zeal* for God was his whipping the buyers and sellers out of the temple a great instance; as it was also of his most gracious respect to the contemned Gentiles, whose court they were whipp'd out of; they making *their house of prayer a den of thieves*, as our Saviour told them. And this may deservedly be numbered among his miracles, because it is unconceivable how a man unarmed, in no authority, and of mean esteem in regard of his parentage, poverty, and low circumstances, should strike such a fear into those people, as to force them without the least offer of resistance to flee before him, if the cause thereof were not extraordinary and more than natural.

And even that miracle which might seem the most inconsiderable, namely his causing his disciple *Peter* to catch a fish with a small piece of money in its mouth, was also instructive of a duty; it being an instance of his *loyalty* to the supreme magistrate; for the money was expended in paying tribute, and taken out of the sea in that strange manner for no other purpose.

In short, I know no one miracle that our Saviour wrought, but over and above its being a seal for the confirmation of his divine mission, it teacheth some one or other good lesson, and is proper for the bettering of the souls of those that seriously consider it.

And that great miracle, which after his ascension (according to his promise) he shewed in sending the Holy Ghost, did promote the business of making men *holy*, in a far higher way than that of example: for the grand and standing office of the spirit in the world, is the exciting in us *holy desires*, and the assisting of us in the performance of *holy actions*. it is the making the Gospel, and all means, effectual to the renovation and reformation of our hearts and lives.

If it be objected, that we read of two miracles, namely, his cursing the fig-tree, and sending the devils into the herd of swine, which are so far from containing any lessons of *morality*, or tending to the least good, that they seem to be on the contrary only of an evil and mischievous consequence:

I answer, That as for our Saviour's cursing the *fig-tree* that bare *leaves*, and had no *fruit* on it, it was a most significant document unto men, that their profession, which is answerable to bearing *leaves*, must be joyned with a suitable practice, and have *fruit* accompanying or 'twill be nothing worth: and *fruitless* persons were taught by that emblem, what they must look for, if they continued so. But the most pregnant meaning of it is (as the learned doctor *Hammond* hath shewn) that the Jews which were just like that leafie-tree without fruit at that time on it, a mere professing people, were to expect speedy destruction from

him, on supposition that they persisted in their unfruitfulness. It is not once to be imagined that this which our Saviour did to the *fig-tree* was any other than *emblematical*: for no one that deserveth the name of a man, would be guilty of such a piece of foolish revenge, as to wreak his anger on a *senseless tree*, or on any thing that's uncapable of being faulty. And besides, it is mentioned in the story as related by St. *Mark*, *chap.* xi. 13. that *the time of figs was not yet*, or, it was not then a season for figs; that is, it was not a good fig-year; which is given as the cause of the tree's being at that time without fruit: and 'tis very probable, that, *that* clause was purposely added, that it might be the more easily observed that our Saviour's curse was not designed to be determinated in the tree, but that it was pronounced against it only as it was an apt resemblance of a professor that is *barren* of good works. So that this miracle was designed no less than the forementioned, to be *instructive* to the spectators of it, and to all that should afterwards hear or read the story concerning it.

And as for that other, *viz.* his sending the devils, which he had ejected out of a poor man, into a herd of swine, and by that means causing them to run violently down a steep hill into the sea, and to perish there: we read, First, That our Saviour did not *command* them, but only (*n*) *suffered* them (as 'tis expressed both by St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*) at their own request to take possession of those beasts. Nor doth the saying unto them, (*o*) *Go*, (which is in St. *Matthew*'s relation of the story,) speak any more than a bare permission; seeing their beseeching him to suffer them to go is there expressed as the occasion of his so speaking. So that the mischief that was done, the *devils* only were the authors or the proper causes of. Nor, secondly, could our Saviour *permit* this, either to make *sport*, or to *please* him with the *destruction* of the *poor creatures*; for both these were infinitely below him, and perfectly contrary to the *seriousness* of his *spirit*, and *goodness* of his nature; but there were very weighty and great reasons why he should thus do.

As, First, To expose the hateful nature of the devils, and to give men to understand and take notice, how extremely they delight in doing mischief; which it doth greatly concern the welfare of our souls, both not to be ignorant of, and well to consider. By this experiment it appeared, that those unclean spirits are so maliciously disposed, and so bent upon mischievousness, as that rather than want objects to vent their spite on, they will be glad to do it upon brute beasts. But especially the devils most inveterate and deadly hatred *to mankind* was hereby shewed; in that when they were no longer permitted to do them a greater, they were glad of an opportunity to make them the objects of a less mischief: and to procure to them what hurt they were able in their *goods*, when they ceased to be in a capacity of tormenting them in their *minds* and *bodies*.

Secondly, By this means there was a discovery made what a *multitude* there were of them that possessed that *one*, or at most (according to St. *Matthew*) *two* persons; insomuch as that those which were cast out of them, were enough to actuate the bodies of a herd of swine, consisting of no fewer than about two thousand, as St. *Mark* saith; and none could

(*n*) Mark v. 13. Luke viii. 32. (*o*) Matt. viii. 31, 32.

could tell (but he that cast them out of the men, and suffered them to enter the swine) how very many each of these might be possessed with. This was of great importance to be known, in order to the understanding of the greatness of the miracle that was wrought in behalf of the miserable wretches; and to their being made sensible how mighty a deliverance Christ had given them. For though the devils declared that their name was *legion*, to signify that they were a huge multitude; yet what they said was too incredible to be received upon the bare word of those who had been lyars from the beginning; but this permission of our Saviour gave a plain demonstration that in *this saying* of theirs they were *not lyars*.

Thirdly, These persons were by this means most effectually taught how infinitely they were obliged to the divine providence, in not suffering this vast number of fiends, all the time they had possession of them, to destroy them; when as they no sooner entered into the herd of swine, but immediately they dispatch'd them all.

Fourthly, This permission was also a just punishment to the *Gadarens* to whom those beasts belonged; who (as afterward it appeared) were a generation of muck-worms, who preferred their *swine* before their *souls*; and so likewise it was a most proper and effectual means for the conversion of them. Several other reasons of this action might be instanced in, but these, nay any one of them, may well suffice. So that it is apparent that this miracle was so far from being a *mischievous* one, or of no use, that there was scarcely any one wrought by our Saviour, more pregnant with profitable instructions.

CHAP. VII.

That to make Men holy was the Design of Christ's Death, proved by several Texts of Scripture: and how it is effectual thereunto, discovered in six Particulars.

FOURTHLY, the making of us holy, as it was the business of our Saviour's whole *life*, so was it also the great end and design of his *death*. And this we are assured of by abundance of express scriptures; some few of which we will here produce, *Rom.* vi. 6. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

2 Corinthians v. 15.——*He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.*

Galatians i. 4. *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,* (*viz.* from its corrupt practices) *according to the will of God and our Father.*

Ephesians v. 25, 26, 27. *Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with*

the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Colossians i. 21, 22. *And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight.*

Titus ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

1 Pet. i. 18. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish, and without spot.*

1 Pet. iii. 18. *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, &c.* That is, saith *Calvin* upon the place, that we might be so consecrated to God as to live and die to him.

1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live to righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Now the *death* of Christ is greatly effectual to this end of making us *holy*, these several ways.

First, As it gave testimony to the truth of his doctrine; which (as hath been shewn) hath no other design. Christ took his death upon it that *that* was true; was willing to expose himself in the defence thereof to a most ignominious and painful death.

Secondly, As the shedding of his blood was a federal right confirming the new covenant, wherein is promised in and through him the pardon of our sins, and eternal happiness, on condition of our sincere repentance, faith, and new obedience: so the blood of Christ is called the *blood of the covenant*, Heb. x. 29.

And *the blood of the everlasting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20.

Thirdly, As it is exemplary of the highest virtue, 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* The greatest *humility* and *self-denial*, the greatest *meekness*, *patience* and *submission to the divine will*, the most wonderful *charity*, and *forgiveness of enemies*, *&c.* are exemplified in our Saviour's death; and so it must needs be very highly effectual towards the promoting of these most excellent graces, and the like, in us, and the expelling and utter extirpating the contrary vices.

One would think it impossible that he should be of an haughty spirit and a *proud* mind, that seriously considers how the only-begotten Son of God humbled himself to the death, even the shameful and ignominious death of the cross: that he should *covet* great things in the world, that frequently affects his mind with the thoughts of his Saviour's emptying himself and becoming poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich, and preferring the death of the *vilest* of wretches before the life of the greatest and most *honourable* person-

ages. How can he be vain and frothy, that considers his Saviour's horrid agony, what a man of sorrows he was, and how acquainted with griefs? How can he storm at the receiving of injuries, and swell with indignation against those that offer him incivilities, and rudely behave themselves towards him, that fixeth his thoughts upon his Saviour's *meek* putting up the vilest and most contemptuous usages, and considereth how gentle, sedate and lamb-like he was when barbarous villains mocked, buffeted and spit upon him, crowned him with thorns, put a robe in a jeer upon his back, and a reed for a sceptre into his hand, and at last acted the parts of the most inhumane butchers towards him? One would think it no uneasie matter to perswade our selves to forgive very heartily the spitefullest and most malicious enemies, whilst we take notice that Christ shed even his precious blood for those that carried in their breasts the greatest malignity against him, and bare him the most deadly hatred; that he suffered *death* for those which in the cruellest manner they were able took away his *life*. What temptation can be forcible enough to prevail upon us *sinners*, to murmur and repine at the hand of God in the afflictions he lays upon us, while we observe how much *greater* sufferings than ours, were with profoundest *submission* to, and also the heartiest approbation of the *divine will*, endured by the not only perfectly *innocent*, but also the *infinitely well deserving* Jesus?

Fourthly, As the death of Christ was likewise a *sacrifice for sin*, it was in an eminent manner effectual to this great purpose. In the death of Christ considered as an *expiatory* and *propitiatory sacrifice*, is the offence that God Almighty hath taken against sin, and the hatred he bears to it, as well as his love to us sinners, abundantly declared; in that he would not forgive it to us without the intervention of no meaner an offering than the blood of his only-begotten Son. Observe what the Apostle St. *Paul* saith to this purpose, *Rom* iii. 25, 26. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* The plain sense of which words (as I conceive) is this: That God might at one and the same time demonstrate how *holy* he is, and how much he *hateth sin* on the one hand, and how infinitely *gracious* he is in his willingness to *forgive sinners* on the other, was Christ set forth by him to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. There are many (and they no adversaries to the doctrine of our Saviour's satisfaction) that do not question but that God could have pardoned sin without any other satisfaction than the repentance of the sinner, (and in the number of them were *Calvin*, *P. Martyr*, *Musculus*, and *Zanchy*, as might be fully shewn out of their several works,) but he chose to have his Son die for it, before he would admit any terms of reconciliation, that so he might perform the highest act of *grace*, in such a way, as at the same time to shew also the greatest *displeasure* against *sin*. And therefore would he thus do, that so he might the more effectually prevent wicked men's encouraging themselves by the consideration of his great mercy, to persist in their *wickedness*. Therefore was Christ set forth to be a propi-

tiatory sacrifice for sin, I will not say that his Father (who is perfectly *sui juris*) might be put by this means into a capacity of forgiving it, but that it might be a cogent motive, and a most prevailing argument to sinners to forsake their sins.

There is an excellent place to this purpose, *Rom.* xviii. 3. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh: God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin* (or by the means of sin) *condemned sin in the flesh*; that is, what the precepts of the *Mosaical* law could not do, in that they were weak by reason of the impetuosity of men's fleshly inclinations, that the Son of God (coming in the humane nature, and in all respects becoming like to us, sin only excepted) did; and by being a sacrifice for sin (so the word [*sin*] signifieth in diverse places, as *Leviticus* iv. 29. *chap.* v. 6. 2 *Cor.* v. 21. and, as I suppose, also *Gen.* iv. 7.) condemned sin in his flesh; he by this means shewing how hateful it is to God, took a most powerful course to kill and destroy it. And moreover, the most dearly beloved Son of God undergoing such extreme sufferings for our sins, it is evidently thereby demonstrated what dismal vengeance those have reason to expect that shall continue impenitent, and refuse to be reclaimed from them: for saith he, *Luke* xxiii. 31. *If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* If God spared not his own most innocent, holy and only Son, than whom nothing was, or could be, more dear to him, but abandoned him to so shameful and painful a death for our sins, how great and severe sufferings may we conclude he will inflict upon those wretches, that dare still to live in *wilful* disobedience.

And from the death of Christ considered as a sacrifice we farther learn, what an esteem God hath for his holy laws, that he would not abate them rigour, nor remit the punishment due to the transgressors of them, without a consideration of no meaner value than the most precious blood of his own Son.

And lastly, In that Christ hath laid down his life at the appointment of God the Father for the purpose of making an atonement for sin, this gives all men unspeakably greater assurance of the pardon of true penitents than the bare consideration of the divine goodness could ever have done: and so by this means have we the greatest encouragement our hearts can wish for, to become new men, and return to obedience; and have all ground of jealousie removed, that we have been guilty of such heinous and so often repeated impieties, as that it may not become the holiness and justice of God to remit them to us, though they should be never so sincerely forsaken by us.

In the *death* of our Saviour thus considered, are contained (as we have seen) the strongest and most irresistible arguments to a holy life; and I farther add, such as are no less apt to work upon the principle of *ingenuity* that is implanted in our natures, than that of *self-love*. For who that hath the least spark of it, will not be powerfully inclined to hate all sin, when he considereth, that it was the cause of such direful sufferings to so incomparable a person, and infinitely obliging a friend as Christ is? Who but a creature utterly destitute of that principle, and therefore worse than a brute beast, can find in his heart to take

pleasure

pleasure in the *spear* that let out the *heart-blood* of his most blessed Saviour; and to carry himself towards that as a loving friend, which was (and still is) the Lord of glory's worst enemy?

Again, Hath Jesus Christ *indured* and *done* so much for our sakes, and we are able to give our selves leave to render all his sufferings and performances unsuccessful by continuing in *disobedience?* Can we be willing that he should do and suffer so many things in *vain*, and much more do our parts to make him do so? Is this possible?

Nay, hath he been crucified for us by the wicked *Jews*, and don't we think that enough? But must we ourselves be crucifying him afresh by our sins, and putting him again to an open shame by preferring our base lusts before him, as the *Jews* did *Barabbas*.

Hath he expressed such astonishing love to us in dying for us, and won't we accept of it? Which we certainly refuse to do while we live in sin. Hath he purchased eternal salvation for us, and such great and glorious things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not entred into the heart of man, to be conceived by him; and can we perswade our selves to be so *ungrateful* to *him*, as well as so *wanting* to *our selves*, as to refuse to receive these at his hands on those most reasonable terms on which he offers them?

Hath he bought us with such a price; and can we refuse to be his servants, and rather chuse to be the slaves of Satan, the Devil's drudges?

Where can we find so many strongly inciting motives to hate and abandon all sin, as are contained, and very obvious in the *death* and sufferings of our Saviour for it?

Fifthly, The death of our Saviour is in a special manner effectual to the making of us in all respects virtuous and holy, as he hath thereby procured for us that grace and assistance that is necessary to enable us so to be. In regard of his *humbling* himself as he did, and *becoming obedient to the death of the cross, hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. Now by virtue of the authority he is by this means invested and dignified with, and particularly as he is king of his church, hath he sent the Holy Ghost to sanctifie us, to excite us to all holy actions, and to assist us in the performance of them.

Sixthly, The death of Christ doth also apparently promote this great design, as by his patient submitting to it he vindicated God's right of *sovereignty* over all his creatures, and the power he hath to require what he pleaseth, and to dispose of them as seems good to him. Whereas the *first Adam* by contumacy, pride and rebellion, did put an high affront upon the authority of his Maker, and his wretched posterity followed his example, and have by that means done what lay in them to render his *right* to their obedience questionable; this blessed *second Adam*, by acting directly contrary, *viz.* by *obedience*, *humility*, and *subjecting* himself to the divine pleasure in the severest expressions and significations of it, hath done publickly and before the world, an infinite honour to his Father: and his absolute right of dominion over his

whole creation, and the power he hath to prescribe to it what laws he judges fitting (which was before so eclipsed by wicked sinners) hath he by this means in the most signal manner manifested and made apparent. And of what force this is to promote our holiness and universal obedience, the dullest capacity may apprehend.

From what hath been said, it appears to be a most plain, and unquestionable case, that our Saviour in his *death*, considered according to each of the notions we have of it in scripture, had an eye to the great work of making men *holy*; and that this was the *main* design which he therein drove at.

And I now add, that whereas it is frequently affirmed in the holy scriptures, that the end of Christ's death was also the *forgiveness* of our sins, and the *reconciling* of us to his Father, we are not so to understand those places, as if these blessings were absolutely thereby procured for us, or any otherwise than upon condition of our *effectual believing*, and yielding obedience to his Gospel. Nor is there any one thing scarcely we are so frequently minded of, as we are of this. Christ died to put us into a capacity of pardon; the actual removing of our guilt is not the necessary and immediate result of his death, but suspended till such time as the aforementioned conditions, by the help of his grace, are performed by us.

But moreover, it is in order to our being encouraged to sincere endeavours to forsake all sin, and to be universally obedient for the time to come, that our Saviour shed his blood for the pardon of it: this was intended in his death, as it is subservient to that purpose; the assurance of having all our sins forgiven upon our sincere reformation, being a necessary motive thereunto. Therefore hath he delivered us from a necessity of *dying*, that we might *live* to God; and therefore doth God offer to be in his son Jesus reconciled to *us*, that we may thereby be prevailed with to be reconciled to *him*. Therefore was the death of Christ designed to procure our justification from all sins past, that we might be by this means provoked to become new creatures for the time to come. Observe to this purpose what the divine author to the *Hebrews* saith, *chap.* ix. 13, 14. *If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God. Purge your consciences from dead works* (for what end? It follows) *to serve* (or in order to your serving) *the living God.*

And thus much may suffice to be spoken concerning the design of our Saviour's death.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII

That it is only the promoting of the Design of making Men holy, that is aimed at by the Apostles, insisting on the Doctrines of Christ's Resurrection, Ascension, and coming again to Judgment.

I MIGHT in the next place proceed to shew, that the *resurrection* of our Saviour did carry on the same design his *precepts*, *promises* and *threatnings*, *life* and *death* aimed at; but who knows not that these would all have signified nothing to the promoting of this or any other end, if he had always continued in the grave, and not risen again as he foretold he would. *If Christ be not risen*, saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* xv. 13. *then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.* So that whatsoever our Saviour intended in those particulars, the perfecting and final accomplishment thereof must needs be eminently designed in his *resurrection.* The Apostle *Peter* tells his countrymen the Jews, *Acts* iii. 21. that, *To them first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless them in turning every one of them from his iniquities.* But furthermore we find the doctrine of *Christ's resurrection* very much insisted on, by St. *Paul* especially, as a principle of the *spiritual* and *divine life* in us; and proposed as that which we ought to have not only a *speculative* and *notional*, but also a *practical* and *experimental* acquaintance with. And he often telleth us, that it is our duty to find that in our souls which bears an analogy thereunto. He saith, Phil. iii. 10. That it was his ambition to know, or feel within himself, the *power of his resurrection*, as well as the *fellowship of his sufferings*; to have experience of his being no longer a *dead* but a *living* Jesus by his enlivening him, and quickening his soul with a new life. And again he saith, *Rom.* vi. 4. that, *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*; that is, Christians being plunged into the water in baptism, signifieth their obliging themselves in a spiritual sense to die and be buried with Jesus Christ (which death and burial consist in an utter renouncing and forsaking of all their sins) that so answerably to this *resurrection*, they may live a holy and a godly life. And it followeth, *verse* 5. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection*; that is, If we are ingrafted into Christ by mortification of sin, and so imitate his death, we will no less have a resemblance of his resurrection, by living to God, or performing all acts of piety and christianity. And then from *verse* 8. to 11. he thus proceeds: *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall* (or *we will*) *also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once* (or for sin once for all), *but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God*; that is, in heaven with God. *Likewise reckon ye your selves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*; that is, after the example of his *death* and *resurrection*, account ye your

your selves obliged to die to sin, and to live to the praise and glory of God.

And the same use that the Apostle here makes of the *resurrection* of our Saviour, he doth also elsewhere of his *ascension* and session at the right hand of God, *Coloss.* iii. 1, 2. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: for you are dead,* that is in profession, having engaged yourselves to renounce your past wicked life, *and your life is hid with Christ in God, &c.* that is, and the life you have by embracing the Christian religion obliged your selves to lead, is in heaven, where Christ is. So that this sheweth the informations the Gospel gives us of these things to be intended for *practical* purposes, and incitements to *holiness.* And Christ's *resurrection,* with his following advancement, we are frequently minded of, to teach us this most excellent lesson, that obedience, patience and humility, are the way to glory; and therefore to encourage us to be followers of him, to tread in his holy steps, and make him our pattern. This we have in the fore-cited place, *Phil.* ii. 5, 6, 7, &c. and *Heb.* xii. 1, 2. we are exhorted *to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* And *verse* 3. To *consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself* (that is, especially how he is now rewarded for it) *lest we be weary and faint in our minds.*

And that the meaning of our being so often minded of our Saviour's *coming again* to *judgment,* is to stir us up to all *holiness* of conversation, who can be so ignorant as not to know? for we are sufficiently told that we must be judged according to our *works,* especially *such works,* as the hypocrites of this age do most despise, and leave to be chiefly performed by their contemned moralists; as appears from *Matt.* xxv. 34. to the end of the chapter. And, lastly, that is very certain, which is intimated in the 123 *page* of the *Free Discourse,* namely, "That all "the doctrines of the Gospel, as merely speculative as some at the first "sight may seem to be, have a tendency to the promoting of real righ-"teousness and holiness, and are revealed for that purpose." But as I did not *there,* so neither will I *here* proceed to shew it, in all the several instances, or in any more than I have now done: and that for the reason that is there given. But besides, I conceive that what hath been discoursed in this section, is abundantly sufficient to demonstrate what we have undertaken, *viz. That to make men truly virtuous and holy, is the design, the main and ultimate design of Christianity.*

SECT.

SECT II.

Upon what Accounts the Business of making Men holy came to be preferred by our Saviour before any other thing, and to be principally designed.

CHAP. IX.

Two Accounts of this: The First, That this is to do the greatest good to Men. And that the blessing of making Men holy, is of all other the greatest, proved by several Arguments, viz. First, That it containeth in it a Deliverance from the worst of Evils; and Sin shewed so to be.

I PROCEED in the next place to shew how it comes to pass, that of all other good things, the making mankind truly virtuous and holy, is the *grand* and *special design of Christianity*. There are these two accounts to be given of it.

First, *This is to do the greatest good to men.*

Secondly, *This is to do the best service to God.*

First, The making of us really righteous and holy, is the greatest good that can possibly be done to us. There is no blessing comparable to that of purifying our natures from corrupt affections, and induing them with virtuous and divine qualities. The wiser sort of the Heathens themselves were abundantly satisfied of the truth of this: and therefore the only design they professed to drive at in their philosophy, was *the purgation, and perfecting of the humane life**. *Hierocles* makes this to be the very definition of it: and by the purgation of men's lives, he tells us is to be understood, the cleansing of them from the dregs and filth of unreasonable appetites; and by their *perfection*, the recovery of that excellency which reduceth πρὸς τὴν Θείαν ὁμοίωσιν, *to the Divine likeness*. Now the blessing of making men *holy*, is of all the greatest.

First, Because it contains in it a deliverance from the *worst of evils*. Those are utterly ignorant of the nature of *sin*, that imagine any evil greater than it, or so great. It was the doctrine of the *Stoicks*, that there is nothing evil but what is *turpe et vitiosum*, vile and vicious. And *Tully* himself, who professed not to be bound up to the *Placita* of any one sect of philosophers, but to be free-minded, and to give his reason its full scope and liberty, takes upon him sometimes most stiffly, and seemingly in very good earnest, to maintain it and dispute for it. But as difficult as I find it to brook that doctrine as they seem to understand it, that more modest saying of his in the first book of his *Tusculan Questions* hath, without doubt, not a little of truth in it, *viz. That there*

* Φιλοσοφία ἐστὶ ζωῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κάθαρσις καὶ τελειότης.

there is no evil comparable to that of sin *. *Hierocles*, a sober philosopher, and very free from the high-flown humour, and ranting *genius*, of the *Stoicks*, though he would allow that other things besides sin, may be χαλεπὰ καὶ δυσδιάθετα, *very grievous, and difficult to be borne*, yet he would admit nothing besides this to be ὄντως κακὸν, *truly evil*; and he gives this reason for it, *viz.* Because that certain circumstances may make other things *good*, that have the repute of *evils*; but none can make *this* so. He saith that the word καλῶς [*well*] can never be joyned with any vice, but so may it with every thing besides: as it is proper to say concerning such or such a person, ἰσχεῖ καλῶς, πένεσθαι καλῶς, he is *well* diseased, he is *well* poor, that is, he is both these to good purpose, behaving himself in his sickness and poverty as he ought to do; but, proceeds he, it can never be said, ἀδικεῖ καλῶς, ἀκολασταίνει καλῶς, &c. he doth injury *well*, or he is *rightly* and as becomes him, intemperate.

Now that wickedness is the greatest of evils, is apparent, in that it injures men's *better part*, their *souls*, whereas it lieth in the power of no other, as the now mentioned philosopher also observeth, so to do. † Do I say, it *injures* them? that's too *gentle* a word, it *marrs* and *spoils* them; as again that person doth in another place speak. ‡ Other evils may ruine our bodies, our fortunes, &c. and may, I confess, by that means *disquiet* and *disturb* our souls; but they can be *depraved* by nought but *sin*; this alone can deprive them of the image of God wherein consists their excellency. And when I say that sin undoes *our souls*, and sin only, I say that this, and this *alone*, undoes *our selves*. ‖ For, as saith the same brave man, *Thy soul is thy self; thy body thine; and all outward things, thy body's.* And the excellent *Simplicius* speaking of *death*, hath this saying, that it is only τῦ σώματος κακὸν, οὐχ ἡμῶν, *an evil to our bodies, not to us.* And this both the *Stoicks* and *Platonists* do much insist upon, and make great use of it. They stick not to tell us, that it is improper to say that a man consists of two parts, whereof the *body* is one; and that this is not μέρος συντεταγμένον, ἀλλ' ὄργανον, a constituent *part* of man, but only his *instrument*: that it is but our *prison* wherein we are confined, our *leather-bag*, our *satchel*, our *case*, our *sheath*, our *house*, our *clothing*, and the like. And we find such a notion of the *body* in the holy Scriptures, as well as in the Heathen writing. St. *Paul* also calls it *our clothing, our earthly house, our tabernacle*, 2 *Cor.* v. 1, 4. St. *Peter* calleth his *body*, this *tabernacle: I think it meet*, saith he, *so long as I am in this tabernacle, &c.* 2 *Pet.* i. 13. *Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, verse* 14. So that *other* evils have that denomination because they are so to such things only (*immediately* I mean) as *belong* to our selves; but *sin* is an *immediate* evil, and the greatest imaginable to our very *selves*; in that in whomsoever it is entertained, it changes the man's nature, spoils his constitution, and makes him quite another thing: from a lovely, noble and excellent, it transforms him into an ignoble, base and contemptible creature. We are not ignorant what names the Scripture bestoweth upon wicked men, even those of the

* *Nè malum quidem ullum cum turpitudinis malo comparandum.*

† Ταυτα, &c. οὐδὲ τὴ ψυχῆ βλαβερὰ τυγχάνει. In Car. Pythag. p. 105.

‡ Φθορὰ δὲ ἀδυνάτε πρᾶγμαι τῦ κακίας. p. 162.

‖ Σὺ γὰρ εἶ ἡ ψυχὴ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα σὸν, τὰ δὲ ἐκτὸς τὰ σώματος. p. 153.

he *uncleaneſt* and moſt impure *beaſts*. There is no ſuch filthineſs (ſaid *icero**) as the *Fœditas turpificati animi*, that of an unclean ſoul: and he philoſophers uſed to expreſs vice by *turpitudo* and τὸ αἰσχρὸν *filthineſs*, as being that which is infinitely diſbecoming, below and unworthy of human nature. † And the wiſe man in his book of the *Proverbs* ſaith, that *a wicked man is loathſome and cometh to ſhame*. There is no ſuch hideous monſter in nature, as a reaſonable creature living in contradiction to the dictates of his underſtanding, trampling under-foot the eternal laws of righteouſneſs, and oppoſing himſelf to the known will of the great Sovereign of the world, of him in whom he liveth, moveth and hath his being, to whom alone he is obliged for all he is or hath, and for the capacity he is in of having any thing for the future which for the preſent he is deſtitute of. A body in which the head and feet have exchanged places, is not more deformed and monſtrous than is a vicious ſoul: for her *ſuperiour* and *governing* part is ſubjected to, and lorded over by her *inferiour*, and that which was deſigned by nature to be kept in ſubjection and governed. Her ἡνιοχῆν (as the *Pythagoræans* phraſe it) or holder of the reins, and *ruling* faculty, is become the ἡνιοχέμενον, the reined in and *ruled* faculty.

I add moreover, that well may ſin be ſaid to ſpoil and mar men's ſouls, for we read in the writings of the Apoſtles that it *kills* them. *She that liveth in pleaſure is* dead, *while ſhe liveth*, 1 Tim. v. 6. *You hath he quickened who were* dead *in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Eph. ii. 1. S. *Jude*, ſpeaking of certain ungodly wretches, ſaith, that they are *twice dead*, ver. 12. And the very ſame notion had diverſe of the Heathens alſo. *Pythagoras* uſed to put a κενοτάφιον, *or empty coffin* in the place of that ſcholar that left his ſchool, to betake himſelf to a vicious and debauched life, as thereby ſignifying, that he was *dead*, dead as to his *nobler* part. And his followers tell us that the ſouls of men *died*, when they apoſtaſized from God, and caſt off the divine life. And ſuch a one, as in whom ſin reigneth, may be called a *dead* man, becauſe, according to them, the definition of a *man* belongs not to him, nor doth he any longer deſerve the name of a *reaſonable* creature. The philoſopher we have ſo often quoted, and ſhall have occaſion to do it oftner, will have wickedneſs to be θανατῶ λογικῆς οὐσίας, *the death of the reaſonable nature*: ‡ And *Simplicius* doubts not to aſſert, that *a man that is drowned in ſenſuality, hath no more of reaſon in him, than a brute creature*.

To return to *God* and to *a right mind*, to be without *God* and without *underſtanding*, were of one and the ſame ſignification with thoſe excellent men. And our Saviour tells us that the prodigal *came to himſelf* when he reſolved upon returning to his father's houſe: as if while he perſiſted in diſobedience, he was as very a *brute*, as thoſe whoſe huſks he fed on, and had utterly *loſt* his *underſtanding*. Though that laſt ſaying of *Simplicius* may ſeem ſomewhat hyperbolical, yet this following one of *Hierocles* hath not the leaſt of a *figure* in it, *viz.* That wicked men do render the *reaſon* that remaineth in them ἀνιέραπόδου φαυλότερον, *more*

* *In lib.* III. *de Officiis.*

† Τὰ κακὰ αἰσχρὰ λέγονται, ὡς ἀτιμίαν τῷ ψυχῇ δηλοῦσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ λογικῆς οὐσίας. Hieroc. p. 78.

‡ Μηδὲν μᾶλλον ἀνθρώπου ἢ ἄλογον ζῶον ὑπάρχοι. Comment. Epict. p. 4.

more base and wretchedly contemptible than the vilest slave. They use altogether in matters of very *bad*, or (at best) of most *mean* concern and therefore as upon that account it were better, so upon this would be even as well, if they had none at all: for the *sagacity* that in beasts is not less serviceable to *them*, than is the *reason* of a wicke man to *him*: nay, had he only that *sagacity* that is observable in man unreasonable creatures, it might stand him in as much stead as his *reaso* doth, and perhaps more. So that from what hath been discoursed, appeareth evidently that *wickedness* is the *worst*, *incomparably* the *worst* *evils*; that it is so in its own *nature*, as well as in its *consequences*: an therefore to deliver us from it, by purifying our lives and natures, is t confer upon us the *greatest* blessing, and consequently is an undertaking of all others, the most worthy of the Son of God.

CHAP. X.

The second Argument, viz. That the Blessing of making Men holy is accom panied with all other that are most desirable, and which do best deserve t be so called: particularly with the Pardon of Sin, and God's special Love And that those things which sensual Persons are most desirous of, are eminently to be found in that blessing.

SECONDLY, This is the greatest blessing, because it is accom panied with all other that are most desirable, and which do *best* deserve to be so called. Where sin is sincerely forsaken, it will cer tainly be *pardoned*: the *nature* of God is such as speaks him mos ready to be reconciled to a true convert. They are our iniquities alone that make, or can make, a separation betwixt us and our God, and our *sins* only that hide his face from us: but the *cause* being re moved, the *effect* ceaseth. When the divine grace that is offered t sinners, becometh effectual to the turning any one from his evil ways God's favour doth naturally return to him: even as naturally as doth the sun's light into those places, where that which before intercepte between it and them, is taken away. He is of so infinitely benign and gracious a nature, that no man can continue an object of his displeasure one moment longer than while he is *incapable* of his favour; and no thing, I say, but sin and wickedness, as he hath often enough assured us, can make men so. Nay, a holy soul is ever the object of his dearest and most special love. He is not only *friends* with, but *takes pleasure* in those that *fear* him, *Psalm* cxlvii. 11. He is said to make his resi dence within such persons, so great is the delight that he taketh in them. *Isaiah* lxvi. 1, 2. *Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? for all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*

John xiv. 23. *Jesus said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* And it is said particularly of him that dwelleth in *love*, which is the fulfilling of the law, that *he dwelleth in God, and God in him.* And I might shew that the Heathens themselves had this very notion. It was a saying used by the *Pythagoreans*; that *God hath not in the whole earth a more familiar place of residence than a pure soul* *.

And *Apollo* is brought in thus speaking,

Εὐσεβέσιν δὲ βροτοῖς γαίνυμι τόσον ὅσσον Ὀλύμπῳ.

To dwell in heaven doth not more please me, then
Within the souls of pious mortal men.

And *Hierocles*, which reciteth that verse, doth himself assert, that *God hateth no man; but as for the good man, he embraceth him with an extraordinary and surpassing affection* †. The righteous Lord loving *righteousness*, his countenance *cannot* but behold the *upright*. Whersoever he finds any impressions of true goodness, as he cannot but highly approve of them, so is it not possible but they should attract his singular love to those which are the subjects of them: according to that measure and proportion that any one participates of his goodness, he must needs have a share in his *grace* and *kindness*. A *holy* person is a man *after God's own heart*, as his servant *David* is said to be: he is a man that carrieth his image, and bears a resemblance to him, and upon that account he cannot fail to be very dearly beloved by him. Now I need not go about to prove, that there is no blessing whatsoever but is implied in an interest in the *divine love*, and especially in *such* a love as that which we have shewed good men are made the objects of.

It might be here shewn also that those things which sensual and carnal persons are most desirous of, *viz. riches, honours*, and *pleasures*, are eminently to be found in the blessing we are now discoursing of; and indeed those which best deserve to be so called, and are in the properest sense so, no where else. Nothing inricheth a man like the graces of God's holy spirit: what St. *Peter* said of *meekness*, is true of all the virtues; they are *in the sight of God* (and he judgeth of things as they are) *of great price.* ‡ They are called *gold tried in the fire*, *Rev.* iii. 18. The *true* and *our own riches*, *Luke* xvi. 12. Which is as much as to say, that these only are *ours*, and all but these are false and counterfeit. These inrich our *souls*, which alone, as was said, deserve to be called *our selves*, and will abide by us when all other have bid *adieu* to us. These do as much excel in true value and worth all those things which the world calls *riches*, as do our immortal spirits transcend our frail and corruptible carkasses. It was one of the maxims of the *Stoicks*, ὅτι μόνῳ ὁ σοφὸς πολίτῃ, that *the wise*, whereby they meant the truly virtuous, man is the only *rich* man. And *Tully* hath this saying upon it. *A man's chest cannot properly be called rich, but his mind only: and though thy coffer be full, so*

* Ψυχῆς καθαρᾶς τὸ τὸν οἰκειότερον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς δεῦρο ἐκ ἔχει.

† —ὃς μισεῖ μὲν οὐδένα ἄνθρωπον, τὸν δὲ ἀγαθὸν διαφερόντως ἀσπάζεται. p. 70.

‡ *Nihil neq; meum est neq; cujusquam, quod auferri, quod eripi, quod amitti potest.* Cicero in paradoxis.

*so long as I see thee empty, I shall not think thee a rich man**. And saith *Hierocles*, ὦ ἐξω τῆς ψυχῆς, πάντα μικρά. *All things that are without a man's soul, are but little* and insignificant trifles. And *the righteous*, saith *Solomon*, *is more excellent than his neighbour*; or he is of greater worth than any other person that is not righteous, *Prov.* xii. 26.

Nothing, again, makes men *so honourable* as doth *virtue* and true goodness, or *at all truly* so; seeing he and he alone that is indued with it, lives up to his highest principle, like a creature possessed of a mind and reason. Nay, this man is moreover, as was said, like to God himself, and imitates his glorious perfections, *viz.* his moral ones. And therefore well might Wisdom say as she doth, *Prov.* viii. 18. *Riches and honour are with me.* To overcome our unruly lusts, and keep in subjection all impetuous desires and inordinate appetites, makes us more deservedly glorious than was *Alexander* or *Julius Cæsar:* for he that thus doth, hath subdued those that mastered those mighty conquerors. And such a one hath praise of God, of the holy angels, and of all men that are not fools, and whose judgments he hath cause to value. *He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*, Prov. xvi. 32.

And no pleasures are comparable to those that immediately result from virtue and holiness: for that man's conscience is a very *heaven* to him that busieth himself in the exercise thereof. While we do thus we act most *agreeably* to the right frame and constitution of our souls, and consequently most *naturally*; and all the actions of *nature* are confessedly very sweet and pleasant. This also very many of the Heathens had a great sense of; even those of them which much doubted of another life wherein virtue is rewarded, commended very highly the practice of it, for this reason, that it is *sibi præmium* a reward to it self. *Simplicius* in his comment upon *Epictetus*, hath this observable saying, that the observation of the rules of virtue in that book prescribed, will make men so happy and blessed even in *this* life, that they shall not need μετα θάνατον τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀμοιβὰς ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι, &c. *to be promised any reward after death*, though that also will be sure to follow.

These things, I say, might be insisted on in this place, but they are such large and spacious fields of discourse, that should we make any considerable entrance into them, we shall find it no easie matter to get out of them. I therefore proceed.

* *Animus hominis dives, non arca appellari potest. Quamvis illa sit plena, dum te inanem videbo, divitem non putabo.* In paradox.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

The third Argument, viz. That whatsoever other Blessings a Man may be supposed to have that is utterly destitute of Holiness, they cannot stand him in so much stead, as only to make him not miserable. And all evil and corrupt affections shewed to be greatly tormenting in their own Nature, and innumerable sad Mischiefs to be the necessary Consequents of yielding obedience to them.

THIRDLY, whatsoever other blessings a man may be supposed to have, that is utterly destitute of this of holiness, they cannot stand him in so much stead as but to make him *not miserable*. We may by the first particular, and what was said upon it, be sufficiently convinced of the truth of this: but I farther add, That sinful lusts are extremely troublesome, disquieting, and painful. *The wicked* (saith the prophet *Isaiah*) *is like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* The labyrinths that sin involves men in, are innumerable; its ways are so full of intricate turnings and windings, that they sadly perplex those poor creatures that walk in them; and it is impossible but they should do so. The greatest *outward* inconveniencies and disastrous misfortunes are very frequently as might be *largely* shewn occasioned by them; but vexations of mind, and troublesome thoughts, are the constant and never-failing effects of them. *Tully* in the forementioned book, saith thus to the vicious man, † *Thy lusts torment thee, all sorts of cares oppress thee, and both day and night torture thee.* And *Hierocles* saith, that *it is necessary that the worst life should be most miserable, and the best most pleasant and delightful.* Covetousness and ambition put men's minds upon the rack to contrive ways of inriching and advancing themselves: and when they have attained to so large a proportion of earthly *profits*, or so high a degree of *honour* as they at first designed, they are *so* far from being at *ease* and *rest* (as they vainly promised to themselves they should) that their *cravings* encrease as do their *fortunes*; and in the midst of their abundance they continue in the same straits that at first afflicted them. Nay, so impetuous is the fury of those lusts, that they drive them into still greater, and cause in *their* souls that are possessed by them a more pungent and a quicker sense of want than they felt when their condition was most mean, and their estate at the lowest. Nor is this mischief any other than a natural and unavoidable consequent of forsaking God (who is, as the Scriptures call him, the *rest*, and as *Plato*, the *center* of souls) and of seeking satisfaction in such things, as are infinitely too little for their vast capacities: which the forementioned are, and all worldly enjoyments.

What a multitude of tormenting cares is *independency* on God and *distrust*

(†) *Tuæ libidines te torquent, te ærumnæ premunt omnes, tu dies noctesq; cruciaris.*——ἐξ ὧν λυπηρόταλον ἀνάγκη εἶναι τοι κάκιστον βίον, τερπνότατον δὲ τὸν ἄριστον.

distrust of his providence perpetually attended with? how impossible is it to give a comprehensive and just catalogue of the many mischiefs and miseries that are the necessary products and genuine off-spring of *intemperance* and *lasciviousness? Solomon* enumerates some of the evils that are the fruits of the *former* of these, *Prov.* xxiii. 29. But to give a perfect account of them would be an endless work. And as for the *latter*, besides the loathsome and painful disease that is ordinarily the consequent of satisfying the cravings of that filthy vice, the *unclean* person is continually in a *restless* condition, and, as it were, in a *constant* fit of a *burning fever*; and, the evil accidents that are occasioned by it are so many, that *they* are not neither to be reckoned up. The *Epicuræans*, though they placed man's chief happiness in *corporeal* pleasures, did strictly notwithstanding forbid *adultery*, because (as they said) instead of performing its promise of pleasure, it robs men of it.

He that is *proud* and *highly conceited* of himself, is disordered and discomposed by the least sleighting word, or neglect of respect, and I had almost said, by the smallest commendation of his neighbour too: and it lieth in the power of any sorry creature, when he list, to afflict his mind.

The *inward* sad effects of *envy* and *malice* are sufficiently observable in the *dismal countenances* of those that are under the power of them; and these hateful and devilish lusts do eat into, and prey upon, the very hearts of those in whose breasts they lodge; and are like *fire* in their bosoms unceasantly torturing them: not to say any thing of the many *outward* and most direful mischiefs that are caused by a full satisfaction of them. * In short, there is not any one inordinate affection, but is so disturbing and disquieting a thing in its own nature, that it cannot but make those who are in subjection to it, though they should have never so many good things to set against it, exceeding miserable in *this* as well as in the *other* world. So that, had our Saviour come into the world, only upon such a design as the carnal Jews expected *their Messiah* would, *viz.* that of making us partakers of a mere *temporal* happiness, he must in order to the succeeding of it *chiefly* have concerned himself to make us *holy*.

If it were possible (as it hath been shewn it is not) that a wicked man would have *God's pardon*, this would not make him cease to be miserable; all it could signifie would be no more than an exemption from being immediately by *him* punished: but tho' the divine Majesty should not in the least afflict him, his very *lusts* would be of themselves no light punishment, but such as under which he could never enjoy himself in this life, but will be found to be intolerable in the life to come: seeing there will *then* be nothing to be met with that can at all suit with his sensual inclinations, or that will have any aptness in it to please and gratifie them: whereas now all places abound with such things as are fit for that purpose; as are able, I say, to gratifie, though

* *Qui Appetitus longius evagantur, &c. & non satis ratione retinentur, &c. ab iis non modò animi perturbantur, sed etiam corpora: licet ora ipsa cernere iratorum, aut eorum qui aut libidine aliquâ aut metu commoti sunt, aut voluptate nimiâ gestiunt: quorum omnium vultus, voces, motus, statusque mutantur.* Cicero lib. 1. de Officiis.

though not to satisfie such appetites. So that this man's condition in the *future* state must needs be very exactly like to his, that is, even parcht and dried up with excessive thirst, but can by no means obtain wherewithal to quench it; no nor yet so much as a little to slake it, and mitigate the pain of it; as he in this state very frequently makes a shift to do.

Were it possible that *Christ's Righteousness* could be *imputed* to an *unrighteous* man, I dare boldly affirm that it would signifie as little to his happiness, while he continueth so, as would a gorgeous and splendid garment to one that is almost starved with hunger, or that lieth rackt by the torturing diseases of the stone or cholick.

And could we suppose such a man to be never so much an object of the divine *benevolence*, nay, and *complacency* too (as there is nothing less supposeable) this could not make him, he continuing wicked, so much as *not miserable:* he being rendred by his wickedness utterly uncapable of such effects of the love of God, as could have upon him so good an influence.

Nay, farther, were our phansies so very powerful, as that they could place him even in *heaven* it self; so long as he continueth unturned from his iniquities, we could not imagine him happy *there*; nay, he would carry a *hell* to heaven with him, and keep it there. It is not the being in a *fine place*, that can make any one cease to be miserable; but the being in a *good state*; and the *place* heaven without the heavenly *state*, will signifie nothing. An unhealthful and diseased *body* will have never the more ease for residing in a *Prince*'s court, nor will a sick and unsound soul have an end put to its unhappiness, though it should live for ever in the presence of *God* himself. That saying to this purpose doth well deserve our repeating, which I find in the excellent book called, *The causes of the decay of christian piety: Alas, what delight would it be to the swine to be wrapped in fine linen, and laid in odours? his senses are not gratified by any such delicacies, nor would he feel any thing besides the torment, of being with-held from the mire. And as little complacency would a brutish soul find in those purer and refined pleasures, which can only upbraid, not satisfie him.*

It is not to be doubted that such habits of mind as men carry *hence* with them, they shall keep in the *other* state; and therefore if we leave this earth with any unmortified and reigning lust, they will not only make us uncapable of the happiness of *heaven*, but also of *any* happiness. For there will be (as was but now intimated) no satisfaction of so much as *gratification* of *carnal* and *brutish*, and much less of *devilish* appetites, in the celestial mansions: and therefore they cannot be otherwise than very grievously painful to the person that is fraught with them; though, I say, we could suppose him to be safely possessed of those glorious habitations.

To sum up all I shall say on this argument, I fear not to assert, that omnipotency it self cannot make a wicked person happy, no not so much as *negatively* so (except he should be annihilated) any otherwise, than by first giving him his grace for the subduing and mortification of his lusts: and that to deliver one from all misery while sin is vigorous in his soul, and bears the sway there, is not an object of *any* power,

and implieth in it a palpable and apparent contradiction. For *misery* is no less of the essence of sin and wickedness, than is light of the sun; so that it is impossible they should ever be separated from one another, but that they must, like the twins of *Hippocrates*, live and die together.

CHAP. XII.

The fourth Argument, viz. That Holiness being perfected is Blessedness it self; and the Glory of Heaven consists chiefly in it. This no new Notion; some Observations, by the Way, from it.

BUT in the last place, well may we call *holiness* the *greatest of blessings*, for when it is *perfected*, it is *blessedness* it self, and the *glory of heaven* is not only entailed upon it, but doth chiefly consist in it. *Beloved* (saith S. *John*), *now are we the sons of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be; but this we know that when he appeareth, we shall be like him, &c.* As if he should say, I cannot tell you particularly and distinctly what the *blessedness* of the other life will be, but this I am sure of, that *likeness to God* is the *general* notion of it; and that it consists, for the substance thereof, in a perfect resemblance of the divine nature. The happiness of heaven doth not lie in a mere fixing of our eyes upon the divine perfections, and in admiring of them, but mainly in so beholding and contemplating them, as thereby to be changed into the express and lively image of them: and in having so affecting a sense of God's infinite justice and goodness, purity and holiness, as will make the deepest impressions of those most admirable qualities on our own souls.

The glory that heaven conferreth upon its inhabitants, consists not so much in an external view of God and Christ, as in a real and plentiful participation of their glorious excellencies; whereby are chiefly to be understood those, that are implied in that general word *holiness*: for as for their other attributes, such as *knowledge*, *power*, *&c.* the devils themselves, who are most of all creatures unlike them, have a large measure of them.

This *blessedness* principally implieth a rapturous love of God, a *feeling*, as well as *understanding*, the goodness that is in him; an inseparable conjunction of the faculties of our souls with him, and a perfect assimulation of our natures to him. The felicity of heaven is an operative thing, full of life and energy, which advanceth all the power of men's souls into a sympathy with the divine nature, and an absolute compliance with the will of God; and so makes him to become all in all to them. So that the happiness of heaven, and perfect holiness are by no means to be accounted things of a different nature, but two several conceptions of one and the same thing, or rather two expressions of one and the same conception. *All that happiness* (as said the learned and pious

pious Mr. *John Smith*) *which good men shall be made partakers of, as it cannot be born up upon any other foundation than true goodness, and a godlike nature within us, so neither is it distinct from it.*

Neither are we to look upon this as any upstart or late notion, for our ancient divines have long since taught it, in this saying that was frequently used by them, *viz.* Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected.

And I cannot but by the way observe, that those which have considered this, will need no other argument to satisfie them, That *that* talk of some [that it is mere servile obedience and below the ingenuity and generosity of a Christian spirit, to serve God for heaven, as well as for the good things of this life only] is very grosly ignorant, very childish prattle: for to serve God in hopes of heaven according to its true notion, is to serve him for himself, and to express the sincerest, and also the most ardent affection to *him*, as well as concernment for our own souls. And therefore it could not but highly become the Son of God himself, to *endure the cross, and despise the shame, for the joy that was set before him*, taking that *joy* in no other sense than hath been generally understood, *viz.* for the happiness of heaven consisting in a full enjoyment and undisturbed possession of the blessed Diety: nor is there any reason why we should enquire after any *other* signification of that word, which may exclude this.

And on the other hand, to be diligent in the service of God for fear of hell, understanding it as a state perfectly opposite to that which we have been describing, is in a like manner from a principle of love to God and true goodness, as well as self-love, and is no more unworthy of a Son of God, than of a mere servant. And thus, the truth of this proposition, *That to make men holy, is to confer upon them the greatest of blessings*, by the little that hath been said is made plainly apparent.

CHAP. XIII.

The second Account of our Saviour's preferring the Business of making Men holy, before any other, viz. That this is to do the best Service to God. An Objection answered against this Discourse of the Design of Christianity.

IT remains secondly to be shewn, *That to promote the business of holiness in the world, is to do God Almighty the best service:* And this will be dispatcht in a very few words. For is it not, without dispute, better service to a prince to reduce rebels to their allegiance, than to procure a pardon under his seal for them? This is so evidently true, that to do this latter, except it be in order to the *former* business, is not at all to *serve* him, nay, it is to do him the greatest of *disservices*. I need not apply this to our present purpose. And therefore, to be sure, the work of making men holy, and bringing over sinners to the obedience of his Father, must needs have been much more in the eye of

our blessed Saviour, than that of delivering them from their deserved punishment, *simply* and in it *self* considered: for his love to *him* will be (I hope) universally acknowledged to be incomparably greater than it is to *us*, as very great as 'tis.

None can question, but that by our apostasie from God, we have most highly dishonoured him, we have robbed him of a right that he can never be willing to let go, *viz.* The obedience that is indispensably due to him as he is our creator, continual preserver, our infinitely bountiful benefactor, and absolute sovereign. And therefore it is as little to be doubted, that Christ would in the *first place* concern himself for the recovery of that right. And, but that both works are carried on together, and inseparably involved in each other, he must necessarily be far more solicitous about the effecting of *this* design, than of *that* of delivering wicked rebels from the mischiefs and miseries they have made themselves liable to, by their disobedience.

So that laying all these considerations together, what can be more indisputable, than that our Saviour's chief and ultimate design in coming from heaven to us, and performing and suffering all he did for us, was to turn us from our iniquities, to reduce us to intire and universal obedience, and to make us partakers of inward, real righteousness and true holiness? And we cannot from this last discourse but clearly understand, that it is most infinitely *reasonable*, and absolutely *necessary*, that it should be so.

But now if after all this it be objected, that I have defended a notion concerning the *design of Christianity*, different from that which hath hitherto been constantly received by all Christians, *viz.* That it is to display and magnifie the exceeding riches of God's grace to fallen mankind in his son Jesus: I answer that he will be guilty of great injustice, that shall censure me as labouring in this discourse to propagate any *new* notion: for I have endeavoured nothing else but a true explication of the *old* one, it having been grosly misunderstood, and is still, by very many, to their no small prejudice. Those therefore that say, that the Christian religion designeth to set forth and glorifie the infinite grace of God in Jesus Christ to wretched sinners, and withal understand what they say; as they speak most truly, so do they assert the very same thing that I have done. For (as hath been shewn) not only the grace of God is abundantly displayed and made manifest in the Gospel to sinners for this end, that they may thereby be effectually moved and perswaded to forsake their sins; but also that principal grace that is there exhibited, doth consist in delivering us from the *power* of them. Whosoever will acknowledge *sin* to be (as we have proved it is) in its own nature the *greatest of all evils*, and *holiness* the *chiefest of all blessings*, will not find it easie to deny this. And besides (as we have likewise shewn) men are not capable of God's *pardoning grace*, till they have truly repented them of all their sins, that is, have in will and affection sincerely left them; and also that if they were capable of it, so long as they continue vile slaves to their lusts, that grace by being bestowed upon them cannot make them *happy*, nor yet cause them to cease from being very *miserable*, in regard of their disquieting and tormenting nature, in which is laid the foundation of hell. The

free grace of God is infinitely more magnified, in *renewing* our natures, than it could be in the bare *justification* of our persons; and to *justifie* a wicked man while he continueth so, (if it were possible for God to do it) would far more disparage his *justice* and *holiness*, than advance his *grace* and kindness: especially since his *forgiving* sin would signifie so little, if it be not accompanied with the subduing thereof.

In short, then doth God most signally *glorifie* himself in the world, when he most of all communicates himself, that is, his *glorious* perfections, to the souls of men; and then do they most *glorifie* God, when they most partake of them, and are rendered most like unto him.

But because nothing is, I perceive, more generally mistaken, than the notion of God's glorifying himself, I will add something more for the better understanding of this, and I am conscious to myself that I cannot do it so well, as in the words of the excellent man we a while since quoted, Mr. *John Smith*, * sometime fellow of Queen's College in *Cambridge: When God seeks his* own Glory, *he doth not so much endeavour any thing* without himself: *He did not bring this stately fabrick of the universe into being, that he might for such a monument of his mighty power, and beneficence, gain some* Panegyricks *or applause from a little of that fading breath which he had made. Neither was that gracious contrivance of restoring lapsed men to himself,* a plot *to get himself some external hallelujahs, as if he had so ardently thirsted after the lauds of glorified spirits, or desired a quire of souls to sing forth his praises: neither was it to let the world see how magnificent he was. No, it is his own* internal glory *that he most loves, and the communication thereof which he seeks: As* Plato *sometimes speaks of the divine love, it ariseth not out of* indigency, *as created love doth, but out of* fulness *and* redundancy: *It is an overflowing fountain, and that love which descends upon created beings is a free efflux from the Almighty source of love: and it is well-pleasing to him that those creatures which he hath made, should partake of it: (p) Though God cannot seek his own glory so, as if he might acquire any addition to himself, yet he may seek it so as to communicate it out of himself. It was a good maxim of* Plato, Τῷ Θεῷ πάντα φθόνον. There is no envy in God, *which is betted stated by* St. James, God giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. *And by that* glory *of his which he loves to impart to his creatures, I understand those stamps and impressions of* wisdom, justice, patience, mercy, love, peace, joy, *and other divine gifts which he bestoweth freely upon the minds of men. And thus God triumphs in his* own glory, *and takes pleasure in the communication of it.*

I proceed now to consider what *useful inferences* may be gathered from our past discourse.

* See his Select Discourses, page 409. (p) Chap. 1. 5.

SECT. III.

An Improvement of the whole Discourse in divers Inferences.

CHAP. XIV.

The First Inference.

That it appears from the past Discourse, that our Saviour hath taken the most effectual course for the purpose of subduing Sin in us, and making us partakers of his Holiness. Where it is particularly shewed, that the Gospel gives advantages infinitely above any those the Heathens had, who were privileged with extraordinary helps for the improvement of themselves. And 1. *That the good Principles that were by natural Light dictated to them, and which reason rightly improved perswaded them to entertain as undoubtedly true, or might have done, are farther confirmed by divine Revelation in the Gospel.* 2. *That those Principles which the Heathens by the highest Improvement of their Reason could at best conclude but very probable, the Gospel gives us an undoubted assurance of. This shewed in four Instances.* 3. *Four Doctrines shewed to be delivered in the Gospel, which no man without the assistance of Divine Revelation could ever once have thought of, that contain wonderful inducements, and helps to Holiness. The first of which hath five more implied in it.*

FIRST, it appears from what hath been said to demonstrate, That our Saviour's grand design upon us, in coming into the world, was to subdue sin in us, and restore the image of God, that consisteth in righteousness and true holiness to us: that he hath taken the most effectual course imaginable for that purpose; and that his Gospel is the most powerful engine for the battering down of all the strong holds that sin hath raised to it self in the souls of men, and the advancement of us to the highest pitch of sanctity that is to be arrived at by human nature. This (as hath been shewn) was the business that the philosophy of the heathens designed to effect; but alas what a weak, and inefficacious thing was it, in comparison of Christ's Gospel! wherein we have such excellent and soul ennobling *precepts* most perspicuously delivered; and moreover such mighty *helps* afforded to enable us, and such infinitely pressing *motives* and *arguments*, to excite us to the practice of them.

And it will not be amiss if we particularly shew, what exceeding great advantages Christians have for the attaining of true virtue, and the sublimest degrees thereof, in this state attainable, above any that were ever vouchsafed to the world by the divine providence, before our Saviour's descent into it. And (not to make a formal comparison between the *Christian* and best *Pagan-Philosophy*, this not deserving upon innumerable accounts to be so much as named with that, and much less to dishonour the religion of our Saviour so far as at all to compare it with

with any of those which were professed by heathenish nations, or that of the impostor *Mahomet*, which, as well as those, in not a few particulars tends greatly even to *corrupt* and *deprave* men's natures) we will discourse according to our accustomed brevity. First, what advantages the Gospel gives us above those which such heathens, as were privileged with extraordinary helps for the improvement of their understandings, had; and secondly, above those which God's most peculiar people, the children of *Israel*, were favoured with.

First, As for those the Gospel containeth above such as the best and most refined heathens enjoyed, it will be worth our while to consider,

First, *That the good principles that were by natural light dictated to them, and which reason rightly improved did perswade them to entertain as undoubtedly true, or might have done, are farther confirmed by divine revelation in the Gospel to us.*

As, *That there is but one God: That he is an absolutely perfect Being, infinitely powerful, wise, just, merciful, &c. That we owe our lives, and all the comforts of them to him; That he is our sovereign Lord, to whom absolute subjection is indispensably due: That he is to be loved above all things; and the main and most important particular duties which it becomes us to perform to him, our neighbour and selves.* We Christians have these things as plainly declared from heaven to us, and as often repeated and inculcated, as if there were no other way to come to the knowledge of them but that of *Revelation*. So that (as hath been shewn in the *free discourse*, *p.* 88.) what the heathens took pains for, and by the exercise of their reason learnt, we have set before our eyes, and need but read it in order to our knowledge of it. It is true, for our satisfaction whether the holy scriptures are divinely inspired, and have God for their author, it is necessary that we employ our reason, except we can be contented to be of so very hasty and easie a belief as to give credit to things, and those of greatest concernment too, we know not why; or to pin our faith on our fore-fathers' sleeves; and so to have no better bottom for the belief of the *Bible*, than the *Turks* have for theirs of the *Alcoran*. But although it is necessary that we should exercise here our disparsive faculty, if we will believe as become creatures indued with reason, yet this is no tedious task, nor such as we need much belabour our brains about. An unprejudiced person will soon be abundantly satisfied concerning the scripture's divine authority, when he doth but consider how it is confirmed, and how worthy the doctrine contained in it is of him whose name it bears. Now, I say, this little pains being taken for the establishment of our faith in the holy scriptures, we cannot but be at the first sight assured of the truth of the contents of them. For no man in his wits can question his veracity who (as even *natural* light assures us) is truth it self.

Secondly, *Those good principles that the heathens by the greatest improvement of their reason could at best conclude but very probable, are made undoubtedly certain by Revelation:* As,

First, *That of the immortality of our souls.* The vulgar sort of heathens, who were apt to believe any thing that was by tradition handed down to them, ('tis confessed) did not seem to doubt of the truth of

this doctrine, but to take it for granted; which (no question) is also to be imputed to the special providence of God, and not merely to their credulity. But the more learned and sagacious, that would not easily be imposed on, nor believe any farther than they saw cause, though by arguments drawn from the notions they had truly conceived of the nature of humane souls, they have diverse of them undertaken to prove them *immortal*; yet could their arguments raise the *best* of them no higher than a *great* opinion of their immortality. *Cato* read *Plato* of the immortality of the soul, as he lay bleeding to death, with great delight; but that argues not that he had any more than great *hopes* of the truth of it. *Socrates* did so believe it, that he parted with *this* life in expectation of *another*; but yet he plainly and ingenuously confesseth to his friends, that it was not *certain*. *Cicero*, that sometimes expresseth great confidence concerning the truth of it, doth for the most part speak so of it, that any one may see that he thought the doctrine no better than probable. He discourseth of it in his book *de Senectute*, as that which he rather could not endure to think might be false, than as that which he had no doubt of the truth of. And after he had there instanced in several arguments which he thought had weight in them for the proof thereof, and expressed a longing to see his ancestors, and the brave men he had once known, and which he had heard of, read and written of, he thus concludes that whole discourse, * *If I err in believing the soul's immortality, I err willingly; neither so long as I live will I suffer this error which so much delights me, to be wrested from me. But if when I am dead, I shall be void of all sense, as certain little philosophers think, I do not fear to have this error of mine laught at by dead philosophers.*

But now the Gospel hath given us the highest assurance possible of the truth of this doctrine; *life and immortality* are said *to be brought to light* by it: He who declared himself to be the Son of God with power, gave men a *sensible* demonstration of it in his own person, by his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven: and both by himself and his apostles (who were also indued with a power of working the greatest of miracles for the confirmation of the truth of what they said) did very frequently, and most plainly preach it.

Secondly, *The doctrine of rewards and punishments in the life to come* (which is for substance the same with the former) *according to our behaviour in this life*, the learned heathens did generally declare their belief of; which they grounded upon the justice, purity and goodness of the divine nature. They considered that good men were often exercised with great calamities, and that bad men very frequently were greatly prosperous, and abounded with all earthly felicities: and therefore thought it very reasonable to believe that God would in another life shew his hatred of sin and love of goodness, by making a plain discrimination between the conditions of virtuous and wicked persons, by punishing these, and rewarding those without exception. But this, though it was, in their opinion, a very *probable* argument, yet they looked not on it as that which amounted to a *demonstration*. For they could not but be aware,

* *Quod si in hoc erro, quòd animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro: nec mihi errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. Sin moriuus, &c.*

aware, That that doctrine which was so generally received by them, *viz.* That virtue is in all conditions a reward, and vice a punishment to itself, did very much blunt the edge of it: and that other very harsh one, That all things besides virtue and vice are ἀδιάφορα, neither good nor evil, did render it (as the perfect *Stoics* did seem too well to understand) too insignificant. But I must confess that *Hierocles*, who (as hath been said) did not admit that notion, but in a very qualified sense, saith of those that think their souls mortal (and consequently that virtue will hereafter have no reward) that when they dispute in the behalf of virtue, κομψεύονται μᾶλλον, ἢ ἀληθεύουσιν, *they rather talk wittily, than truly and in good earnest.* The excellent *Socrates* himself, when he was going to drink off the fatal drug, thus said to those that were then present with him, "I am now going to end my days, whereas your "lives will be prolonged; but whether you or I upon this account are "the more happy, is known to none but God only," intimating that he did not look upon it as *absolutely certain* that he should have any reward in another world, for doing so heroically virtuous an act, as chusing martyrdom for the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead. But now, what is more frequently or clearly declared in the Gospel, than that there will be rewards and punishments in the world to come suitable to men's actions in this world? than that Christ will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness, and that *all must appear before his judgment-seat, to receive according to what they have done, whether it be good or whether it be evil*, 2 *Cor.* v. 10.

Thirdly, *That men's sins shall be forgiven upon true repentance*, from the consideration of the goodness and mercy of God, the heathens were likewise perswaded, or rather hoped: but we Christians have the strongest assurance imaginable given us of it, by the most solemn and often reiterated promises of God; and not only that some or most, but also that all without exception, and the most heinous impieties, upon condition of their being sincerely forsaken, shall in and through Christ be freely forgiven.

Fourthly, *The doctrine of God's readiness to assist men by his special grace in their endeavours after virtue*, could be no more, at the *best*, than *probable* in the judgment of the heathens, but we have in the Gospel the most express promises thereof, for our mighty encouragement. *Tully* in his book *de Natura Deorum* saith, that their city *Rome*, and *Greece*, had brought forth many singular men, of which it is to be believed, none arrived to such a height *nisi Deo juvante*, but by the help of God. And after he tells us, that *Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu Divino unquam fuit*, No excellent man was ever made so but by some divine affiation. And *Pythagoras* in his golden verses exhorts men to pray unto God for assistance in doing what becomes them.

——ἀλλ' ἴσχειν ἐπ' ἔργον
Θεοῖσιν ἐπευξάμενον τελέσαι.

And *Hierocles* (with whom I confess my self so much enamoured, that I can scarcely ever forbear to present my reader with his excellent sayings, when there is occasion;) He, I say, upon this clause of *Pythagoras*, hath a discourse, concerning the necessity of our endeavours after virtue

on the one hand, and of the divine blessing to make them successful on the other, which I have often admired. And even *Seneca* himself, very unlike a *Stoick*, saith, *Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est, &c.* No man can be made good without God; for can any one raise up himself without his help?

But none of these could have *assurance*, that God would not deny his special assistance to any that seriously seek after it; especially since men have brought themselves into a state of imbecillity and great impotence, through their own default. But this, I say, the Gospel gives all men very serious offers of, and assures them, if they be not wanting to themselves, they shall obtain. Hence our Saviour saith, *Ask, and it shall be given unto you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then being evil, know how to give gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit unto them that ask him?* *Luke* xi. 9, *&c.* And the same thing is told us by St. *James*, in these words, *Chap.* i. 5. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* *Antoninus* the philosopher puts men upon praying for a good mind above all things, but all the encouragement *he* could give was, καὶ θεὼρει τί γίνεται, *and see what will come of it.**

Thirdly, We have other doctrines made known to us by the Gospel, which no man could ever without divine revelation in the least have *dream'd* of. As,

First, *That God hath made miserable sinners, the objects of such transcendent kindness, as to give them his only-begotten Son.* And there are these five doctrines implied in this, which are each of them very strong motives and incentives to holiness, *viz.*

1. That God Almighty hath made such account of us, and so concerned himself for our recovery out of that wretched condition we had by sinning against him plunged our selves into, as to send his own Son from heaven, to shew us on what terms we may be recovered, and also in his name even to (*q*) *pray* and *beseech* us to comply with them. That he should send no meaner a person than one who was the (*r*) *Brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person by whom also he made the worlds*, upon this errand, is such a motive to holiness as one would think no sinner could be able to stand out against. That God should send an ambassador from heaven to assure us that he is reconcileable, and bears us good will, notwithstanding our high provocations of him, and to lay before us all the parts of that holiness which is necessary to restore our natures to his own likeness, and to make us capable of enjoying blessedness; and most pathetically moreover to entreat us to do what lieth in us to put them in practice, that so it may be to eternity well with us; and that this ambassador should be such a one also as we now said, never was there so marvellous an expression of the divine love; and

* *Lib.* 9. *Sect.* 40. (*q*) 2 Cor. v. 20. (*r*) Heb. i. 2, 3.

and therefore one would *conclude* it perfectly irresistible by all persons that have not extirpated out of their natures all ingenuity.

2. That this Son of God conversed upon equal terms with men, and was incarnate for their sakes (*s*). *Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the flesh.* That he should become the son of man, submit to be born of a woman, is a demonstration that God is so far from having cast off humane nature, that (as much as it is depraved) he beareth a very wonderful good will still to it, and hath a real desire to re-advance and dignifie it: even this simply considered, and without joyning with it the consideration of the *design* of it, might make us conclude this: seeing Christ's taking *our* nature is the bringing of it so near to the *divine*, as to lodge it within one and the self-same person. And therefore, besides the motive to holiness drawn from God's infinite *love* therein expressed, this doctrine containeth another very powerful one, *viz.* That it must needs be the vilest thing to dishonour our nature by sin and wickedness, and far more so, than it was for the incarnation of *Jesus* Christ; in that it may now be properly said, that it is in his person advanced above even the nature of *angels*; for him who is invested with it do they themselves worship. And how can any Christian, while he considereth this, be able to forbear thus to reason with himself? Shall I by harbouring filthy lusts debase that nature in my *own* person, which God hath to such an infinite height exalted in his *Son's?* God forbid. What an additional motive is this, to do as *Pythagoras* advised his scholars, in these words, *Above all things revere and stand in awe of thy self**. Do nothing that is disbecoming and unworthy of so excellent a nature, as thine is.

3. That this Son of God taught men their duty by his own example, and did himself perform among them what he required of them. Now that he should tread before us every step of that way, which he hath told us leadeth to eternal happiness, and commend those duties which are most ungrateful to our corrupt inclinations, by his own practice; our having so brave an example is no small encouragement to a chearful performance to all that is commanded. For how honourable a thing must it needs be to imitate the only begotten Son of God, and who is God himself! How glorious to follow such a pattern! Those who have any thing of true generosity, cannot but find themselves, by the consideration hereof, not a little provoked to abandon all sin, and to set themselves very heartily to the performance of whatsoever duties are required of them. And as for *those*, which we are apt to look upon as unworthy of us, and too low for us (such as meek putting up of affronts, and condescending to the meanest offices for the serving of our brethren) how can *his* spirit be too lofty for them, that considers *Christ's* was not? Now these are all such motives and helps to holiness, the like to which none but those who have the Gospel, ever had.

4. That this Son of God was an expiatory sacrifice for us. We have already shewn what cogent arguments to all holy obedience are herein contained.

5. That this Son of God being raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven is our high priest there, and *ever lives* (as the author to the *Hebrews* saith) *to make intercession* with his Father *for us* (*t*). The Heathens,

(*s*) 1 Tim. iii. 16. * Παντων δε μαλιστ' αιχυνε σεαυτον. (*t*) Chap. vii.

thens, it is confessed, had a notion of *dæmons* negotiating the affairs of men with the supreme God; but they could never have imagined in the least that they should be so highly privileged, as to have one who is the begotten Son of this God, and infinitely above all persons dear to him, for their perpetual mediator and intercessor. I need not say what an encouragement this is to an holy life.

And as the doctrine of God's giving his Son, which containeth the five forementioned particulars, is such as the highest improvement of reason could never have caused any thing like it to have entered our thoughts, or that is comparable thereunto for the effectual provoking of men to the pursuance of all holiness of heart and life: so,

Secondly, *The doctrine of his sending the Holy Ghost, to move and excite us to our duty, and to assist, chear, and comfort us in the performance of it,* may go along with it. How could it once have been thought, without divine revelation, that a person indued with the divine nature, with infinite power and goodness, should take it upon him as his office and peculiar province to assist men's weakness in the prosecution of virtue? But this doth the Gospel assure us of; as also that those which do not resist and repel his good motions shall be sure to have always the superintendency of this blessed Spirit, and that he will never forsake them, but abide with them for ever, and carry them from one degree of grace to another, till at length it is consummate and made perfect in glory. And to this I add,

Thirdly, *The doctrine of our union with Christ through this spirit:* which union, (to speak in the words of the learned Dr. *Patrick* in his *Mensa Mystica*) *is not only such a moral one as is between husband and wife, which is made by love; or between king and subjects, which is made by laws; but such a natural union as is between head and members, the vine and branches, which is made by one spirit or life dwelling in the whole.* The Apostle saith, 1 *Cor.* xii. 12, 13. *As the body is one and hath many members; and also the members of that body being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body.* Now see what use the Apostle makes of both these, 1 *Cor.* vi. 15, 19, 20. *Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?* God forbid. And then he thus proceeds in the 19 and 20 verses. *What, know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.* What helps and incitements we have to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of God, from these *two doctrines, is inexpressible.*

Lastly, *The doctrine of the unconceivably great reward, that shall be conferred upon all good and holy persons, which the gospel hath revealed,* is such as could not possibly by the mere help of natural light enter into the thoughts of those that were strangers to it. We are therein assured not only of another life, and that good men shall therein be rewarded, but likewise that the reward that shall be conferred upon them, shall be no less than an *hyperbolically hyperbolical weight of glory:* as are the words of S. *Paul,* 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. Those that *overcome,* are promised that *they shall sit with Christ on his throne, even as he overcame and is set down with his*

his Father on his throne, Rev. iii. 21. In short, the happiness that our Saviour will reward all his faithful disciples with, is so expressed, as that we are assured it is inexpressible, and likewise far exceeding the short reach of our present conceptions: of which their *souls* are not only to partake, but their *bodies* also, they being to be made (as *vile* as they are in this state) (*u*) *like the glorious body* of Jesus Christ, and though sown in *corruption* and *dishonour*, to be raised in *glory*, 1 *Cor.* xv.

Now though, as we said, the learned heathens did many of them, by the exercise of their reason, make it probable to themselves that their souls were immortal, and that in another world virtuous persons shall be richly rewarded; yet no reasoning of theirs could ever enable them so much as to conjecture, that this reward shall be such an *immensely* great one, as *that* the Gospel assures us of; there being a wonderful disproportion betwixt the best services that the most virtuous persons are in a possibility of performing, and such a reward as this; and it being also impossible that so great a felicity as that of the *soul* only, should be a necessary and natural result from the highest degrees of holiness that are attainable in this low and imperfect state. But yet it is too well known to be concealed, that the *Pythagoræans* and *Platonists* do speak very great things of the happiness of heaven; and those of them that discourse intelligibly concerning it, do give *in the general* the Gospel notion of it. I have found *Simplicius* somewhere, in his comment on *Epictetus*, calling it an *eternal rest with God*. And the *Pythagoræan* verses conclude with these two.

Ἦν δ' ἀπολείψας σῶμα εἰς αἰθέρ' ἐλεύθερον ἔλθῃς,
Ἔσσεαι ἀθάνατος Θεὸς, ἄμβροτος, οὐκ ἔτι θνητός.

When from this body thou'rt set free,
Thou shalt mount up to th' sky:
And an immortal God shalt be,
Nor any more shalt die.

Where by [*Thou shalt be an immortal God*] the commentator *Hierocles* understands, thou shalt be like to the immortal gods, and by them he meaneth, as appears by his comment upon the first verse, those excellent spirits that are immediately subordinate to their maker the supreme God, and *the God of gods*, as he calls him; by which he seemeth to understand the same with those called in the Scripture *arch-angels*; for I find that he gives the name *angels* to an order next below them. So that, according to him, it was the *Pythagoræan* doctrine, That good men shall, when they go to heaven, be made in state and condition like to those that are likest to God Almighty. But how they should learn this, by mere natural light, is unimaginable. That which is most probably conjectured, is, that they received these with several other notions from the ancient traditions of the *Hebrews*. But as for their σῶμα λαμπρόειδες, and Ὄχημα πνευματικὸν, *the splendid body*, and *spiritual vehicle* they talk of, they mean not that glorious *celestial* * body, which

(*u*) Phil. iii. 21.

* This notion of a fine body did Tertullian retain his belief of, after he was converted to Christianity, and took it for the inner man, spoken of in Scripture.

which the Apostle tells us this *terrestrial* one shall be changed into, but, a thin subtile body, which they say the soul even while it is in this gross one is immediately closed in: and which being in this life well purified from the pollution it hath contracted from it's case of flesh, the soul taking it's flight from thence with it, enjoyeth its happiness in it. But, I say, the change of this *vile* into a *glorious* body they were perfectly strangers to.

Now what an unspeakable encouragement to *holiness* is the happiness which the Gospel proposeth to us, and gives us assurance of also, that the now mentioned, or any of the philosophers could never by the best improvement of their intellectuals have conceived to be so much as likely to be attainable by mankind! and who would still serve their filthy lusts, and in so doing be the vilest of slaves here, that look to reign with the King of the world for ever hereafter? *He that hath this hope in him*, saith S. John, *purifieth himself even as he is pure*, 1 John iii. 3.

And what hath been spoken of the greatness of the *reward* which is promised in the Gospel to obedient persons, may be said also of the *punishment* it threatneth to the disobedient. It would make, one would think, an heart of oak, and the most hardened sinner to tremble and shake at the reading of those expressions it is set forth by. Some of the philosophers do speak very dreadful things concerning the condition of wicked men in the other world; but they fall extreamly short of what the Gospel hath declared. But I confess a discourse on this head will not very properly come in here. For mere reason might make it exceedingly probable, that so highly aggravated sins as those which are committed against the Gospel are, shall be punish'd as severely, if impenitently persisted in, as is declared by our Saviour and his Apostles they shall be. But however it is no small awakening to us Christians, that we have such an undoubted assurance from God himself, what we must expect if we will not be prevailed upon by all the means afforded us for our reformation, but shall notwithstanding them persevere in the neglect of known duties, and in the allowance of known wickedness.

CHAP. XV.

That the Gospel containeth far greater Helps for the effecting of the Design of making Men inwardly righteous, and truly holy, than God's most peculiar People, the Israelites, were favoured with. Where it is shewed, 1. That the Gospel is incomparably more effectual for this Purpose than the Mosaical Law was. 2. And that upon no other Accounts the Jews were in Circumstances for the obtaining of a thorow Reformation of Life and Purification of Nature, like to those our Saviour hath blessed his Disciples with.

IN the second place, it is the cleerest case, *That the Gospel of our Saviour containeth far greater helps and advantages for the effecting of the great work of making men really righteous and truly holy*

holy, than God's most peculiar people, the Israelites, *whom he knew and favoured above all the nations of the earth, were partakers of.*

First, Nothing is plainer than that the Gospel is incomparably more effectual for this purpose, than the *Mosaical* law was. For indeed that was *directly* designed only to restrain those that were under the obligation of it from the more *notorious* sins. *It was added*, saith the Apostle, *because of transgression, till the seed should come, &c.* Gal. iii. 19. *Justin Martyr* saith particularly of the *sacrifices*, that the end of them was to keep the Jews from worshipping idols, which *Trypho* also, though a Jew that greatly gloried in the law, acknowledged. They were an extremely carnal and vain people, exceedingly prone to be bewitched with the superstitions of the Gentiles; God gave them therefore a pompous way of worship that might gratifie their childish humour, and so keep them from being drawn away with the vanities of the Heathens among whom they dwelt: and he gave them, withal, such *precepts* inforced with threatnings of most severe and present punishments, as might by main force hold them in from those vile disorders, immoralities and exorbitances that had then overspread the face of the woefully depraved and corrupted world. It is certain that the law of *Moses*, strictly so called, did *properly* tend to make them no more than externally righteous; and whosoever was so, and did those works it enjoyned (which they might do by their own natural strength) was esteemed according to that law, and dealt with, as just and blameless; and had a right to the immunities and privileges therein promised. But much less was it accompanied with grace to indue the observers of it with an inward principle of holiness.

And the Apostle S. *Paul* expresseth this as the great difference between that *law* and the *gospel*, in calling *this* the *spirit*, and *that* the *letter*, as he several times doth. Not that God, who was ever of an infinitely benign nature, and *love* it self (as S. *John* describes him) was wanting with his grace to well-minded men under the Old Testament; or that the Jews were all destitute of an inward principle of holiness; nothing less: but the law which *Moses* was peculiarly the promulger of, did not contain any promises of grace, nor did the obligation thereof extend any farther than to the outward man. But there ran, as I may so express my self, a vein of Gospel all along with this law, which was contained in the covenant made with *Abraham* and his seed, by virtue of which the good men among the Jews expected justification and eternal salvation, and performed the substance of those duties which the New Testament requireth, and which were both by *Moses* and the Prophets, at certain times, and upon several occasions, urged upon them.

But as for this law of *Moses* considered according to its *natural* meaning, it is called *a law of a carnal commandment*, Heb. vii. 16. And the services it imposed, *weak and beggarly elements*, Gal. iv. 9. And a *law which made no man perfect*, Heb. vii. 19. Its promises therefore were only *temporal*; upon which account the author to the Hebrews saith, that the Gospel is established *on better promises*. Nor was justification before God obtainable by it, as S. *Paul* frequently sheweth; and therefore did account the righteousness of it very mean and vile in compari-

son of that which the Gospel indued men with. No man could be acquitted by the severest observance of this law from any other than *civil* punishments, nor were its *sacrifices* able to make the offerers *perfect as pertaining to the conscience*, Heb. ix. 9. And though it be true (as Mr. *Chillingworth* observeth in his sermon on *Gal.* v. 5.) *That the legal sacrifices were very apt and commodious to shadow forth the oblation and satisfaction of Christ; yet this use of them was so mystical and reserved, so impossible to be collected out of the letter of the law; that without a special revelation from God, the eyes of the Israelites were too weak to serve them, to pierce through those dark clouds and shadows, and to carry their observation to the substance. So that*, proceeds he, *I conceive those sacrifices of the law in this respect are a great deal more beneficial to us Christians: for there is a great difference between sacraments and types: types are only useful after the antitype is discovered, for the confirmation of their faith that follow. As for example*, Abraham's *offering of* Isaac *by faith did lively represent the real oblation of Christ; but in that respect was of little or no use till Christ was indeed crucified; it being impossible to make that history a ground work of their faith in Christ. The like may be said of the legal sacrifices.*

And for a clear understanding of the direct use of this law, I refer the reader to that sermon: where it is fully, and, in my opinion, as judiciously discoursed as I have ever elsewhere met with it.

Secondly, Nor were these special favourites of heaven upon any other accounts in circumstances for the obtaining of a thorow reformation of life, renovation and purification of nature, comparable to those which our Saviour hath blessed his disciples with. For though they had, as we said, for the substance the same *spiritual precepts* which are enjoyned in the Gospel over and above the *Mosaical* law; yet these were inforced by no *express* promises of eternal happiness, or threatnings of eternal misery: nor was so much as a *life to come* otherwise than by tradition, or by certain ambiguous expressions (for the most part) of their inspired men, or by such sayings as only implied it, and from which it might be rationally concluded, discovered to them: as for instance, in that place particularly, where God by his representative, an angel, declared himself to his servant *Moses* to be *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob* (*x*); from whence our Saviour inferred that doctrine for this reason, That *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living* (*y*). And that the notices they had hereof were not very plain and clear, is apparent, in that there was a sect among them, *viz.* the *Sadducees*, that professed to disbelieve it; and yet, notwithstanding, were continued in the body, and enjoyed the privileges of the Jewish Church. But that one forecited assertion of the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. putteth this out of all question, *viz.* That Christ hath *brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.* From whence we may assuredly gather thus much at least, *viz.* That in the Gospel is manifestly revealed life and immortality, which was never before made known so certainly.

I add moreover, that the Israelites were required to keep at such a distance from all other nations, that they could not but be by that means greatly inclined to morosity, self-conceitedness, and contempt of their fellow-creatures: and were ever and anon employed in such services

(*x*) Exod. iii. 6. (*y*) Matth. xxii. 32.

services as naturally tended, through the weakness of their natures, to make their spirits too angry and fierce, not to say *cruel*. As for instance, that of destroying God's and their enemies, and sometimes their innocent children too, and the cattle that belonged to them. And several connivances and indulgencies they had (as in the cases of divorce and polygamy and revenge) which did not a little conduce to the gratifying of sensuality, and the animal life; all which are taken away by our saviour Christ. These things, with diverse others, made it in an *ordinary way* impossible for those people to arrive at that height of virtue and true goodness, that the Gospel designeth to raise us to. And though we find some of them very highly commended for their great sanctity; we are to understand those *encomiums* for the *most* part, at least, with a reference to the dispensation under which they were; and as implying a consideration of the circumstances they were in, and the means they enjoyed.

And thus have we shewed what a most admirably effectual course our blessed Saviour hath taken to *purifie us from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit*, and to make us in all respects righteous and holy; and how much the Christian dispensation excelleth others as to its aptness for this purpose. And from what hath been said we may safely conclude, That neither the world, nor any part of it was ever favoured by God with means for the accomplishment of this work, comparable to those which are contained in the Christian religion.

So that, well might S. *Paul* call the gospel of Christ *the power of God to salvation* (z), that is, both from misery and the cause of it. Well may the weapons of the Christian warfare be said *not* to be *carnal and weak, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, and casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ* (a). Great reason had *Clemens Alexandrinus* to call our Saviour ἀνθρωπότητος παιδαγωγόν, *the instructor and school-master of humane nature* *; and to say, as he doth in the following words, *That he hath endeavoured to save us by using with all his might, all the instruments of wisdom, or all wise courses, and draws us back by many bridles from gratifying unreasonable appetites.* And *Justin Martyr*, speaking of the Gospel, had cause pathetically to break out as he did, in these words, ὦ παθῶν ἀνιῶν φυγαδευτήριον, &c. † *O thou expeller and chaser away of evil affections! O thou extinguisher of burning lusts! This is that which makes us not poets or philosophers or excellent orators, but of poor mortal men makes us like to many immortal gods, and translateth us from this low earth to those regions that are above Olympus.* And well, again, might the same good Father, having throughly acquainted himself with the *Stoick* and *Platonick* philosophy, (by which latter he thought himself to have gained much wisdom) and at last by the advice of an old man a stranger, having studied the Gospel, thus express himself, ταύτην μόνην φιλοσοφίαν εὗρισκον ἀσφαλῆ καὶ σύμφορον, &c. ‡ *I found this alone to be the safe and profitable philosophy, and thus and by this means became I a philosopher.*

(z) Rom. i. 16. (a) 2 Cor. x. 5. * Pædag. p. 120.
† Oratio ad Græcos, p. 40. ‡ Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 225.

* *Simplicius* saith thus of *Epictetus* his *Enchiridion*, That it hath πολὺ τὸ δραστήριον καὶ κινητικὸν, *so much of powerfulness, and pungency*, that those which are not perfectly dead, must needs come to understand thereby their own affections, and be effectually excited to the rectifying of them. Could he give such a character as this of that little book of his Brother-Heathen; what can be invented by us high enough for the Gospel? That, as very fine a thing as it is, being extremely weak and insufficient for the purpose upon the account of which he praiseth it, if compared with this blessed book.

CHAP. XVI.

An Objection against the wonderful Efficacy of the Christian Religion for the Purpose of making Men holy, taken from the very little Success it hath herein, together with the prodigious Wickedness of Christendom. An Answer given to it in three Particulars, viz. 1. *That how ill soever its Success is, it is evident from the foregoing Discourse, that it is not to be imputed to any Weakness or Inefficacy in that Religion. The true Causes thereof assigned.* 2. *That it is to be expected that those should be the worse for the Gospel, that will not be bettered by it.* 3. *That there was a Time when the Gospel's Success was greatly answerable to what hath been said of its Efficacy. And that the Primitive Christians were People of most unblameable and holy Lives. The Gnosticks improperly called Christians in any Sense. The Primitive Christians proved to be Men of excellent Lives, by the Testimonies of Fathers contained in their Apologies for them to their Enemies; and by the Acknowledgments of their Enemies themselves. An Account given in particular of their meek and submissive Temper, out of Tertullian.*

IF it be now objected against what we have said of the admirable efficacy of the Christian religion for the purpose of making men holy, That there is but very little sign of it in the lives of those that profess to believe it: for who are more woefully lost as to all true goodness, who are more deeply sunk into sensuality and brutishness than are the generality of Christians? Nay, among what sort of men are all manner of abominable wickednesses and villanies to be found to rise, as among them? Upon which account the name of *Christian* stinks in the nostrils of the very Jews, Turks and Pagans. Beastly intemperance and uncleannesses of all sorts, the most sordid covetousness, wretched injustice, oppressions and cruelties; the most devilish malice, envy and pride; the deadliest animosities, the most outrageous feuds, dissentions and rebellions; the plainest and grossest idolatry, highest blasphemies and most horrid impieties of all kinds are in no part of the world more observable than they are in Christendom, nor most of them any where so observable. And even in those places where

* Page 2.

where the Gospel is most truly and powerfully preached, and particularly in this our nation, there is but little more to be taken notice of in the far greater number, than the *name of Christians*; nor any more of religion, than insignificant complimentings of God, and a mere bodily worship of him. But what abominable vice is there, that doth not here abound? nay, where doth the *highest* and most daring of impieties, *viz. Atheism* it self, so boldly shew its head as it doth here? And as for those among us that make the greatest pretences to Christianity, besides a higher profession, a more frequent attendance on ordinances, and a mighty zeal for certain fruitless opinions they have taken up, and little trifles which signifie nothing to the bettering of their souls, and carrying on that which we have shewed is the Design of Christianity; there is little to be observed in very many, if not most, of them, whereby they may be distinguished from other people. But as for the sins of covetousness, pride and contempt of others, disobedience to authority, sedition, unpeaceableness, wrath and fierceness against those that differ in opinion from them, censoriousness and uncharitableness; it is too obvious how much the greater part of the sects we are divided into are guilty of *most*, if not *all* of them. And that which is really *the power of godliness* doth appear in the conversations of but very few.

God knows, the wickedness of those that *enjoy* and profess to believe the Gospel, is an extremely fertile and copious theme to dilate upon; and is fitter to be the subject of a great volume (if any one can persuade himself so far to rake into such a noysome dunghill, as sure none can, except enemies to Christianity) than to be discoursed by the bye, as it is here. Nor can there be any easier task undertaken than to shew, that not a few mere *Heathens* have behaved themselves incomparably better towards God, their neighbour, and themselves, than do the generality of those that are called *Christians*. Nay, I fear it would not be over-difficult to make it appear, that the generality of those that never heard the Gospel, do behave themselves in several respects better than they do.

But I have no list to entertain my self or reader with such an unpleasant and melancholy argument, but will betake my self to answer the sad objection which is from thence taken against the truth of our last discourse.

1. And, in the first place, let the Gospel have never so little success in promoting what is designed by it; whoever considers it, and what hath been said concerning it, cannot but acknowledge that it is in *it self* as fit as any thing that can be imagined for the purpose of throughly reforming the *lives*, and purifying the *natures* of mankind: and also incomparably more fit than any other course that hath ever been taken, or can be thought of. So that we may certainly conclude, That the depravedness of Christendom is not to be ascribed to the inefficacy of the Gospel, but to other causes: namely, men's unbelief of the truth of it: as much as they *profess* faith in it: their inexcusable neglect of considering the infinitely powerful motives to a holy life contained in it; and of using the means conducing thereunto prescribed by it. And these are inseparable concomitants, and most effectual promoters of each other. Every man's inconsideration is proportionable

to his incredulity, and his incredulity to his inconsideration: and how much of carelessness is visible in men's lives, so much of unbelief doth possess their hearts: and so on the contrary. Upon which account *to believe* and *to be obedient*, and *not to believe* and *to be disobedient*, are synonymous phrases, and of the same signification in the New, and likewise in the Old Testament. Now it is a true saying of *Tertullian*, *Pervicaciæ nullum oppositum remedium Deus*, God hath provided no remedy, that is, no ordinary one, against wilfulness. And though the Gospel hath such a tendency as hath been shewn, to work the most excellent effects in men, yet it doth not operate as *charms* do, nor will it have success upon any without their own concurrence, and co-operation with it. The excellent *rules of life* laid down in the Gospel must necessarily signifie nothing to those, that only *hear* or *read* them, but will not *mind* them. Its *promises* or *threatnings* can be exciting to none, that will not *believe* or *consider* them: nor can the arguments it affordeth to provoke to assent, be convincing to any but those that impartially weigh them; its helps and assistances will do *no* good, where they are totally neglected. And though there be preventing as well as assisting grace going along with the Gospel, for the effectual prevailing on men's wills to use their utmost endeavour to subdue their lusts, and to acquire virtuous habits; yet this grace is not such as that there is no possibility of refusing or quenching it. Nor is it fit it should, seeing mankind is indued with a principle of freedom, and that this principle is essential to the humane nature.

I will add, that this is one immediate cause of the unsuccessfulness of the Gospel, to which it is very much to be attributed; namely, men's strange and unaccountable mistaking the design of it. Multitudes of those that profess Christianity are so grosly inconsiderate, not to say worse, as to conceive no better of it than as a *science* and *matter of speculation:* and take themselves (though against the clearest evidences of the contrary imaginable) for true and genuine Christians, either because they have a general belief of the truth of the Christian religion, and profess themselves the Disciples of Christ Jesus in contradistinction from *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Pagans;* and in and through him alone expect salvation: or because they have so far acquainted themselves with the doctrine of the Gospel, as to be able to talk and dispute, and to make themselves pass for *knowing people:* or because they have joined themselves to that party of Christians which they presume are of the purest and most reformed model, and are zealous sticklers for their peculiar forms and discriminating sentiments; and as stiff opposers of all other that are contrary to them. Now the Gospel must necessarily be as ineffectual to the rectifying of such men's minds, and reformation of their manners, while they have so wretchedly low an opinion of its design, as if it really had no better: and so long as they take it for granted its main intention is διδάξαι, ἀ βελτιῶσα, *to make them orthodox, not virtuous*, it cannot be thought that they should be ever the more holy, nay, 'tis a thousand to one but they will be in one kind or other the more unholy for their Christianity.

And lastly, There are several untoward opinions very unhappily instilled into professors of Christianity, which render the truths of the Gospel

Gospel they retain a belief of, insignificant and unsuccessful as to the bettering either of their hearts or lives, as infinitely apt and of as mighty efficacy as they are in themselves for those great purposes.

2. Secondly, Whereas it was said also, that the generality of heathens live in diverse respects better lives, than do multitudes, and even the generality, of those that profess Christianity; it is so far from being difficult to give a satisfactory account how this may be without disparaging our excellent religion; that it is to be expected that those people should be even much the *worse* for it, that refuse to be *bettered* by it. It is an old maxim, that *Corruptio optimi est pessima*: the *best* things being spoiled, do prove to be the very worst: and accordingly, nothing less is to be looked for, than that degenerate Christians should be the vilest of all persons. And it is also certain, that the best things, when abused, do ordinarily serve to the worst purposes; of which there may be given innumerable instances. And so it is, in this present case. St. *Paul* told the *Corinthians*, that he and the other apostles were *a savour of death unto death*, as well as *of life unto life* (*b*). And our Saviour gave the *Pharisees* to understand, That *for judgment he was come into the world; that those that see not, might see; and that those that see, might be made blind* (*c*); that is, That it would be a certain consequent of his coming, not only that poor ignorant creatures should be turned from darkness to light, but also that those which have the light, and shut their eyes against it, should be judicially blinded. And the forementioned Apostle, in the first Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*, saith of those that *held the truth in unrighteousness*, that would not suffer it to have any good effect upon them through their close adhering to their filthy lusts, that *God gave them up* to the most unnatural villanies, permitted them to commit them by with-holding all restraints from them; and likewise *gave them over* εἰς νοῦν ἀδόκιμον, *to a reprobate mind*. So that, from the just judgment of God it is, I say, to be expected, that depraved Christians should be the most wicked of all people: and therefore it is so far from being matter of wonder, that those who will not be converted by the Gospel, should be so many of them very horribly prophane; that it is rather so, that all those which, having for any considerable time lived under the preaching of it, continue disobedient to it, should not be such. In the purest ages of the church, were degenerated Christians made in this kind most fearful examples of the divine vengeance: And so utterly forsaken of God, that they became (if we may believe *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, and others of the ancient Fathers) not one whit better than incarnate devils. Nor were there to be found in the whole world, in those days, and but rarely since, such abominable and most execrable wretches as they were. I have sometimes admired that humane nature should be capable of such a monstrous depravation, as several stories recorded of them do speak them to have contracted: But,

3. Thirdly, If we must needs judge of the efficacy of the Gospel for the making men holy, by its success herein; let us cast our eyes back upon the *first ages of Christianity*, and then we shall find it an easie matter

(*b*) 2 Cor. ii. 16. (*c*) John ix. 39.

to satisfy ourselves concerning it, though we should understand no more of Christianity, than the effects it produced in those days.

For though there were then a sort of people that sometimes called themselves *Christians*, that were (as was now said) the most desperately wicked creatures that ever the earth bare; yet these were esteemed by all others that were known by *that name* as no whit more of *their* number, than the *Pagans* and *Jews* that defied Christ. And their religion was a motly thing that consisted of *Christianity*, *Judaism* and *Paganism*, all blended together; and therefore in regard of their mere profession they could be no more truly called *Christians* than *Jews* or *Pagans*. Or rather (to speak properly) they were of no religion at all, but would sometimes comply with the *Jews*, and at other times with the *Heathens*, and joined readily with both in persecuting the *Christians*: And, in short, the *Samaritans* might with less impropriety be called *Jews*, than these *Gnosticks*, *Christians*.

'Tis also confessed that the orthodox Christians were calumniated by the Heathens as flat *Atheists*, but their only pretence for so doing was their refusing to worship *their* Gods. And they likewise accused them of the beastliest and most horrid practices; but it is sufficiently evident that they were beholden to the *Gnosticks* for those accusations; who, being accounted Christians, did by their being notoriously guilty of them give occasion to the enemies of Christianity to reproach all the professors of it, as most filthy and impure creatures. I know it is commonly said that those calumnies proceeded purely from the malicious invention of their enemies; but it is apparent, that those vile hereticks gave occasion to them; but that the Christians were so far from being guilty of such monstrous crimes, that they did lead most inoffensive and good lives, doth abundantly appear by the apologies that diverse of the Fathers made to the heathen emperors, and people in their behalf. *Justin Martyr* in his apology to *Antoninus Pius* hath this saying, ἡμέτερον ἂν ἔργον, &c. *It is our interest that all persons should make a narrow inquisition into our lives and doctrine, and to expose them to the view of every one.* And he afterwards tells that emperor, *That his people had nothing to lay to their charge truly, but their bare name, Christians.* And, again, *that they which in times past took pleasure in unclean practices, do live now (that they are become converts to Christianity) pure and chaste lives: they which used magical arts, do now consecrate and devote themselves to the eternal and good God: They which preferred their money and possessions before all things else, do now cast them into the common stock; and communicate them to any that stand in need: They which once hated each other, and mutually engaged in bloody battles, and (according to the custom) would not keep a common fire,* πρὸς τοὺς ἐκ ὁμοφύλους, with those that were not of the same tribe, *now live lovingly and familiarly together; that now they pray for their very enemies: and those which persecute them with unjust hatred they endeavour to win to them by persuasions, that* they *also, living according to the honest precepts of Christ, may have the same hope, and gain the same reward with themselves from the great governor and lord of the world.*

Athenagoras in his apology, saith thus to the Emperors *Aurelius Antoninus*, and *Aurelius Commodus*: *As very gracious and benign as you are to all others, you have no care of us who are called* Christians; *for you suffer*

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us who commit no evil, nay, who (as shall hereafter appear) do behave our selves of all men most piously and justly both towards God and your government, to be vexed, to be put to flight from place to place, and to be violently dealt with. And then he adds some lines after; *If any of you can convict us of any great or small crime, we are ready to bear the most severe punishment that can be inflicted upon us.* And speaking of the calumnies that some had fastened upon them, he saith, *If you can find that these things are true, spare no age, no sex; but utterly root us up and destroy us, with our wives and children, if you can prove that any of us live like to beasts,* &c.

And there is very much to the same purpose in *Tertullian*'s apology: Where he tells *the* Roman governours, *that they dealt otherwise with the* Christians, *than with any other whom they accounted malefactors; for whereas they tortured others to make them confess the faults they were accused of, they tortured these to make them deny themselves to be Christians: and that having no crime besides to lay to their charge which carried the least shew of truth, their professing themselves to be no Christians would at any time procure for them their absolution.* And to this objection, that there are some Christians that do *excedere à regula disciplinæ*, depart from the rules of their religion, and live disorderly; he returneth this answer, *Desinunt tamen Christiani haberi penes nos: but those that do so, are no longer by us accounted Christians.* And, by the way, let me recite *Rigaltius* his short note upon this passage, *At perseverant hodie in nomine & numero Christianorum, qui vitam omnem vivunt antichristi: but those now-a-days do retain the name and society of Christians, which live altogether Anti-christian lives.* And (proceeds he) *Tolle publicanos, &c.* Take away publicans and a wretched rabble which he musters together, *& frigebunt hodiernorum Ecclesiæ Christianorum; and our present Christian Churches will be lamentably weak, small and insignificant things.*

From these few citations out of the apologies of the forementioned Fathers, to which may be added abundance more of the same nature both out of them, and others, we may judge what rare success the Gospel had in the *first ages*, and what a vast difference there is between the Christians of *those*, and of *these* days; that is, between the Christians that were under persecution, and those that since have lived in ease and prosperity. When the Christian Religion came to be the religion of nations, and to be owned and encouraged by emperors and rulers, then was the whole vast *Roman* empire quickly perswaded to march under its banner; and the very worst of men for *fashions-sake*, and in expectation of *temporal* advantages, came flocking into the Church of Christ. Nay, the *worse* men were, and the less of conscience they had, the more forward might they *then* be so to do, the more haste they might make to renounce their former religion, and take upon them the profession of Christianity. And no sooner was the Church set in the warm sunshine of worldly riches and honours, but it is apparent she was insensibly over-run with those noisom vermine, which have bred and multiplied ever since, even for many centuries of years.

If any shall doubt whether the forementioned Fathers might not give too good a character of the Christians whose cause they pleaded; I desire them to consider whether this be imaginable, seeing their enemies, to whom they wrote their defences of them, could easily, they living among

among them, have discovered the falsity of their commendations. And we find them frequently appealing to the heathens own consciences, whether they themselves did not believe that true which they said of them: and moreover we have them ever and anon triumphing over them, and provoking them to shew such effects of their *philosophy* and *way of religion*, as they themselves could witness were produced by the *Gospel* of Christ.

Nay, and we have their adversaries themselves giving them a very high character. *Tertullian* in his forementioned apology saith, that *Pliny* the second (who was a persecutor of Christians) wrote thus to the emperor *Trajan* from the province where he ruled under him, *viz.* * *That, besides their resolute refusing to offer sacrifice, he could learn nothing concerning their religion, but that they held meetings before day to sing praises to Christ and God, and to engage their sect in solemn leagues; forbidding murther, adultery, deceit, disloyalty, and all other wickednesses.*

And in a now extant Epistle of his to that emperor, we find him giving him this information, *viz.* † That, some that had renounced Christianity, and now worshipped his image, and the statues of their Gods, and cursed Christ, did affirm, ‡ *That this was the greatest fault or error they were guilty of, that they were wont upon a set day to assemble together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ as to a God: and to bind themselves by a Sacrament, not to any wickedness, but that they would not commit thefts, robberies, adulteries: that they would not be worse than their words, that they would not deny any thing intrusted in their hands when demanded of them: which done, it was their custom to depart, and to meet again,* ad capiendum cibum promiscuum, tamen & innoxium, *to eat a common but innocent and harmless meal*, which was doubtless the *Agape* or *feast of charity*, which was in the primitive times in use among the Christians, after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This was an excellent account of them, and much too good to be expected from apostates, such having been ordinarily observed to be of all others, the most deadly enemies of Christianity and the professors of it.

But to return to our author, he a few lines after adds, that he put two maid-servants upon the rack, to extort from them as full a discovery as he could of the Christians crimes; § *but he could not find any they were guilty of, except obstinate and excessive superstition:* So he called their constant perseverance, and diligence, in observing the precepts of their most excellent religion.

‖ And the emperor *Antoninus Pius*, as much an enemy of Christians

* *Præter obstinationem non sacrificandi, nihil aliud se de sacramentis eorum comperisse, quàm cœtus antelucanos ad canendum Christo & Deo, & ad confœderandam Disciplinam: homicidium, adulterium, fraudem, perfidiam, & cætera scelera prohibentes.*

† *Lib.* 10. *Epist.* 97. *Edit. ult.*

‡ *Affirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quòd essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem, seque, Sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent, &c.*

§ — *Sed nihil aliud inveni, quàm Superstitionem pravam & immodicam.*

‖ *Justin Martyr. Apolog. ad Antoninum Pium.*

tians as he was, writes thus in an Epistle to the people of *Asia*, (which is to be seen in *Justin Martyr*, and affixed to the apology he directed to him) *viz.* *That they could make no proof of the crimes they laid to the Christians charge, and they overcame them by chusing to lay down their lives rather than to do the things they required of them: And that he thought it fit to advertise them, that the Christians, when earthquakes happened, were not under such dreadful fears as* they *were; and that they were* ἐυπαῤῥήσιαστότεροι πρὸς τον Θεὸν, *indued with a firmer confidence and trust in God.* And there next followeth another Epistle of the emperor *Antoninus Philosophus* to the Senate and people of *Rome;* wherein he gave them an account of an imminent danger that he and his army were in, in the heart of *Germany*, by the sudden approach of nine hundred and seventy thousand Barbarians and enemies: And how that finding his strength to oppose them very small, he commanded all those to appear before him who were called *Christians*, (as suspecting, 'tis like, either their fidelity or courage) and perceiving there were a great number of them, very sharply inveighed against them: *Which* (saith he) *I ought not to have done in regard of the virtue which I after found to be in them; whereby they began the fight not with darts and weapons and sound of trumpets, &c. Wherefore* (proceeds he) *it is meet that we should know, that those whom we suspect for Atheists,* Θεὸν ἔχουσιν ἀντάμαχον ἐν τῇ συνειδήσει τετειχισμένον, have God willingly inclosed, or of his own accord inhabiting, in their conscience: *For laying themselves flat upon the earth, they prayed not only for me, but also for my whole army, which was then present, that they might be a means of solace and comfort to us, in our present hunger and thirst, (for we could not come by any water for five days together:) But as soon as they were prostrate upon the ground, and prayed to a God whom I knew not, immediately there fell rain from heaven, upon us, very cool and refreshing, but upon our adversaries* χάλαζα πυρώδης, a fiery hail storm: *And their prayer was instantly accompanied with the presence of God, as of one invincible and insuperable. Therefore let us permit these people to be Christians, lest they praying to have the like weapons employed against us, they should obtain their desire.* And a few lines after, the emperor declared it his will and pleasure, that *whosoever accuseth a Christian as such, for the time to come, he shall be burnt alive.*

What better satisfaction can we desire, concerning the truth of the forementioned Father's account of the Christians that lived in their days, than that which the pens of these their enemies have given to us?

There is one thing more I will add concerning the primitive Christians, *viz.* That the most calm, meek, peaceable, gentle and submissive temper recommended in the Gospel, did mightily discover it self in them: And thereby we may judge what kind of people they were as to the other parts of Christianity; it being impossible that such an excellent spirit should be alone, and unaccompanied with the other virtues. Though they were for the most part very sorely persecuted, yet, as *Tertullian* saith (in his book *ad Nationes*), *Nunquam conjuratio erupit*, there was never any uproar or hurly-burly among them. And having, in his apology, ask'd the two emperors, and the rest, this question, *If we are commanded to love our enemies, whom have*

we then to hate? He thus proceeds: *How often do you your selves rage against the Christians who are obedient unto you, and moreover suffer them to be stoned and burnt by the rout of common people; but yet what revenge did ye ever observe them repaying for the injuries done unto them, as stout-hearted as they are even to death it self?*

If it be objected, as it is by some, that this might be attributed not to their good temper, but to mere necessity, seeing they knew themselves too weak to succeed in any rebellious or violent attempt: let the same *Tertullian* give an answer; and he doth it in the very next words. *In one night,* saith he, *with a few firebrands, they could revenge themselves sufficiently upon you, if they thought it lawful to render evil for evil.* Nay, and not only so, but he tells them plainly, that they were in circumstances to manage the parts of *hostes exerti*, open enemies against them, as well as of *vindices occulti*, sly and secret revengers; and that they could raise an army, if it pleased them, numerous and powerful enough to cope with them; and withal he thus proceeds: *Hesterni sumus, & vestra omnia implevimus, &c. Though we are but as it were of yesterday, yet you have no place but is full of us; your cities, your islands, castles, towns, council-houses; your fortresses, tribes, bands of souldiers, palace, senate, court,* Sola vobis relinquimus templa, *Your* temples *only are empty of us. And he goes on,* Cui bello non idonei, &c. *What battles are not we able to wage with you, who are so willingly slain by you? but according to the laws of our religion we esteem it better to be killed than to kill.* Nay, he next tells them, *Potuimus inermes nec rebelles, &c. We need not take arms and rebel to revenge our selves upon you, for we are so great a part of the empire, that by but departing from you, we should utterly destroy it, and affright you with your own solitude, and leave you more enemies than loyal subjects.* And so far were they from making use of the advantages they had to deliver themselves by the way of violence, that (as not long after he saith to them) *they prayed for the emperors, and those in authority under them, for peace and a quiet state of affairs among them: and,* as somewhere he adds, *very ready also to give them assistance against their enemies.*

* *Origen* also tells *Celsus*, that he or any of his party were able to shew ἐδὲν στάσεως ἔγγον, *nothing of sedition*, that the Christians were ever guilty of: and yet what *Tertullian* said of the *Roman* empire in general, this father elsewhere in the same book speaketh of *Greece* and *Barbary, viz.* That the Gospel had subdued all that country and the greater part of this, and had brought over to godliness souls innumerable.

Thus you see how far the primitive Christians were from the tumultuous, fiery, and boisterous spirit, that Christendom above all other parts of the world, hath been since infested with. And thus we have shewn that there was once a time (God grant that the like may be again) when the success of the Christian religion in conquering men's lusts, and rectifying their natures, was greatly answerable to the efficacy that it hath for this purpose. And so we pass to the second Inference.

* Page 115.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

The second Inference.

That we understand from what hath been said of the Design of Christianity, *how fearfully it is abused by those that call themselves the* Roman Catholicks. *That the* Church *of* Rome *hath by several of her Doctrines enervated all the Precepts and Motives to Holiness contained in the Gospel. That she hath rendred the Means therein prescribed, for the Attainment thereof, extremely ineffectual. That she hath also as greatly corrupted them. Divers Instances of the* Papists Idolatry. *Their* Image Worship *one Instance. Their* praying to Saints departed *another. Other Impieties accompanying it, mentioned. Some Account of their Blasphemies, particularly in their* Prayers to the Blessed Virgin. *Their* worshipping the Host *the third, and grossest Instance of their Idolatry. Some other of their Wicked and most* Antichristian *Doctrines.*

SECONDLY, by what hath been said concerning the *Design of the Christian religion*, we easily understand how fearfully it is abused by those that call themselves the *Roman Catholicks*. Nor need we any other argument to prove *popery* to be nothing less than *Christianity* besides this, *viz.* That the grand design of *this*, is to make us holy; and also aimeth at the raising of us to the most *elevated* pitch of holiness, and is admirably contrived for that purpose: but the religion of the *Papists*, as such, doth most apparently tend to carry on a design most opposite thereunto: to serve a carnal and corrupt interest; to give men security in a way of sinning; and pretendeth to teach them a way to do, at one and the same time effectually, the most contrary and inconsistent things. That is, to *deprave their natures*, and *save their souls*; and even in gratifying their wicked inclinations to lay a firm foundation for eternal happiness. So that, if *this* (as they pretend it alone is) be the Christian religion, we must needs ingenuously acknowledge, that what we said in the introduction was by *Celsus* and *Julian* charged upon it, is no calumny, but an accusation most just and well deserved. For as the *Church of Rome* hath rendred divers excellent *precepts* of holiness very ineffectual, by making them *counsels* only, not *commands*; and also not a few of its *prohibitions* unnecessary, by her distinction of sins into *mortal* and *venial*; understanding by *venial* sins such as for the sake of which no man can deserve to lose the divine favour; and therefore making them really no sins: so hath she enervated all the *evangelical commandments*, both *positive* and *negative*, and made them insignificant by a great many doctrines that are taught by her most darling sons, and decreed or allowed by her self. That one Popish doctrine of the *non-necessity of repentance before the imminent point of death*; and that (though the Church requireth it upon holy-days, yet) no man is bound by the divine law to it until that time, is of it self, without the help of any other, sufficient to take away the force of all the holy *precepts* of our Saviour, and to make them utterly unsuccessful to the embraces of it: and this other goeth beyond *that* in aptness

ness for this purpose, *viz.* That mere *attrition*, or sorrow for sin for fear of damnation, if it be accompanied with confession to the priest, is sufficient for salvation. For, as the former maketh a *death-bed repentance* only necessary, so this latter makes that repentance alone so, which is far from deserving to be so called, and which wants the principal ingredients of that grace, *viz. Hatred of sin, and love to God and goodness;* and consequently works no *change* in the *nature* of the sinner, nor makes him partaker in the least measure of true holiness.

The *threats of hell* have they made a mere scare-crow by their doctrine of *purgatory;* and the fear of *this* too have they taken a notable course to secure men from by that of *penances*, and the *indulgences* granted by their Popes very ordinarily for doing certain odd trifles and idle things; but which by money can never fail to be procured. Nor are the most *horrid impieties* shut out from having their share in his holiness his *indulgences;* as more than sufficiently appears by the *tax of the Apostolical chancery;* where, to those that will pay the price, absolutions are to be had for the most *abominable* and not to be named villanies, nay, and *licences* also, for not a few wickednesses.

I may add to the forementioned, their doctrine of the meritorious *supererogations* of the saints, which, being applied to others, they teach to be available for their pardon; which besides its most impious making many co-saviours with *Jesus* Christ, doth infinitely encourage to carelessness and loose living.

The religion of the *means* prescribed in the Gospel, have they done what lay in them to make both extremely ineffectual, and highly irreligious. I say,

First, *Most ineffectual:* for they will have the *bare saying of prayers* without the least minding of what is said, to be acceptable to, and prevalent with, Almighty God: and congruously to this fine doctrine, their church enjoins them to be said in a tongue that is unknown to the generality of her children. Though the *Papists* cannot, for shame, but acknowledge it a *good* thing to give attention to what is said in the worship of God, yet, I say, it is well known that they deny it to be *necessary* so to do; and make the mere *opus operatum*, the work done, sufficient; and that in all acts of devotion whatsoever. And besides their divine service is made by them an idle and vain piece of pageantry, by the abundance of foppish ceremonies it is burthened with. Nay,

Secondly, it is made as *wicked as ineffectual:* it being accompanied with so great immoralities as *gross idolatries*, together with other very impious practices: whereof

First, *Their worshipping of images* is a notorious instance: they making pictures of Christ and his cross, and even of the holy Trinity, and giving (as they themselves profess to do) *latria* or divine honour to them. And as for what they have, by stretching their wits upon the tenters, invented to defend themselves from the guilt of *idolatry* in those actions, it will do the Heathens as much service as themselves, and no less successfully clear and acquit them from that foul imputation. *Celsus* in defence of their idols, saith, That they are not gods, but Θεῶν ἀναθήματα, *gifts consecrated to them.* And the Heathens in *Lactantius* are brought in saying, *Non ipsa timemus simulachra*, &c. *We fear, or worship not the images*

mages themselves, but those whose representatives they are, and to whose names they are consecrated. And several other citations might be produced to shew, that the *divine honour* that was by the Heathens bestowed on their images, was *relative only* (as the *Papists* say theirs is, and think they get a main matter by so saying) and not *absolute*. But as for their worship of the *image of the cross*, it is grosser idolatry than I believe can be shewn the wiser sort of Pagans were ever guilty of. For the *cross* it self is the ultimate term of their divine adoration, and the *image* is worshipp'd *relatively*, as it represents the *cross*. In short, their *image-worship* is as expressly forbidden by the second commandment as words can do it, and one may conclude that they themselves are not a little conscious of it, in that *that commandment* is left out of their offices of frequent use.

Secondly, another plain instance of their *idolatry* is their *praying to saints departed*. And whereas they pretend that they do not pay them any divine honour, and that they only pray to the saints to pray for them; this pretence is but a pitifully thin cob-web to hide the idolatry of that practice. For besides that their invocations of them, and of the *same saints* too in innumerable places at vast distances each from other, do imply an opinion of such an excellency in them, (*viz.* such a knowledge as can hardly be at all short of *Omniscience*) as we can no where find God Almighty hath vouchsafed to any creature; they likewise make their prayers to them with professions of confidence in them, and with all the rites of invocation, in sacred offices, and in places set apart for divine worship; and moreover they set particular saints over whole cities and countries (one single one over this, and another over that) and put up petitions to them for their help and succour. And the *Roman Catechism* made by the decree of the council of *Trent*, and published by the Pope's command, doth give them encouragement thus to do (as the late Bishop of *Down* sheweth in the former part of his *Dissuasive from Popery*) in these words; *the saints are therefore to be invocated, because they continually make prayers for the health of mankind, and God gives us many benefits by their merit and favour: and it is lawful to have recourse to the favour or grace of the saints, and to use their help: for they undertake the patronage of us.* And he adds that the council of *Trent* doth not only say, It is good to fly to their *prayers*, but also to their *aid*, and to their *help*. And he furthermore minds them of this distich in the church of S. *Laurence* in *Rome* (*d*),

Continet hoc templum sanctorum corpora pura
A quibus auxilium suppleri poscere cura.

Within this church saints holy bodies lie,
Pray them, that they with help would thee supply.

So that over and above the great *impiety* of their *praying to saints*, discovered in making them in some kind equal to Christ, and in derogating from the sufficiency of his merits, satisfaction and intercession; God being prayed to with reliance on *theirs* as well as on *his*, and through *them* as well as *him*, (as may be farther and largely shewn in their prayers,

(*d*) *Sess.* 9.

ers, and chiefly in those to the blessed Virgin,) I say, besides this gross *impiety* of that practice, it can never be justified from the charge of *idolatry*. And by whatsoever arguments they endeavour therein to prove themselves no idolaters, it will be no difficult matter by the same to vindicate the Heathens from that crime in worshipping their *dæmons*, *heroes* and *deified* emperors. And for *Hierocles* his part, I cannot find that he alloweth of praying to any one but him whom he calls the *Supreme God*. for, speaking of the honour that is due to that order of spirits which is immediately subordinate to him, and above the *dæmons* and *heroes*, all he saith concerning it (*e*), is, that it consisteth in understanding the excellency of their natures, and in endeavouring after a likeness to them: whereas he hath afterward a very excellent discourse of the necessary obligation men are under of praying to God.

But I have not yet instanced in the worst part of the *Popish* prayers to departed saints, the blasphemies contained in those to the *Virgin Mary* are such, as I would not defile my pen with the recital of any of them, did I not know it to be too needful. She is stiled in their publick prayers, *the saviour of despairing souls; the bestower of spiritual grace, and dispenser of the most divine gifts; one higher than the heavens, and deeper than the earth;* and many such compellations as are proper only to some one person of the glorious Trinity, are given in them to her. In her anthem she is supplicated for *pardon of sin*, for *grace* and for *glory*. And the forementioned learned Bishop observeth, that in the mass-book penned *A. D.* 1538, and used in the *Polonian* churches, they call the blessed Virgin *viam ad vitam*, &c. *the way to life, the governess of all the world, the reconciler of sinners with God, the fountain of remission of sins, light of light*. and at last she is there saluted with an *ave universæ Trinitatis mater, hail thou mother of the holy Trinity*. And he adds that the council of *Constance* in the hymn they call a *Sequence*, did invocate the *Virgin* in the same manner as councils did use to invocate the *Holy Ghost*: that they call her the *mother of grace, the remedy of the miserable, the fountain of mercy, and the light of the church*. And lastly, his lordship alledgeth a *psalter of our Lady*, that hath been several times printed at *Venice*, at *Paris* and *Leipsick*, the title of which is, *The Psalter of the Blessed Virgin compiled by the seraphical Doctor S.* Bonaventure, &c. Which consisteth of the *Psalms of David*, one hundred and fifty in number: in which the name of *Lord* is left out, and that of *Lady* put in, and altered where it was necessary they should to make sense. Therein, whatsoever *David* said, whether prayers or praises of *God* and *Christ*, they say of the *Blessed Virgin; and whether* (saith he) *all that can be said without intolerable blasphemy, we suppose needs not much disputation*. Who would not readily conclude it altogether impossible for any men to invent, or approve, nay, or not to have indignation against, such daring and most execrable impieties, that are not utterly bereft of their senses, or are but one remove from perfect *Atheists?* There are diverse other most prodigious sayings concerning the Virgin *Mary* transcribed out of the approved books of great sons of the *Roman Church*, in the now cited *Dissuasive from Popery*, to which I refer the reader. And to them I will add some, which may doubtless vie with the worst that we can well imagine were ever uttered, of one *Johannes*

(*e*) Pag. 22.

Joannes Argentus, a prime Catholic youth, which he hath exposed to the view of the world in a right worthy piece, treating of the seven excellencies of the most Blessed Virgin. Saith he, *Christus servit atque assiduè ministrat Matri suæ, Christ serveth and continually administreth to his Mother:* and next thus vents himself in a great fit of devotion to her. *O si liceret, quàm libenter me illi socium adjungerem*, &c. *If it might be lawful, Oh, how gladly would I joyn my self with him as his companion! How willingly would I learn of him the way of perfectly serving thy self, and God!* (the reader will not anon judge his *placing the Virgin before God himself*, as proceeding from inadvertency,) *How willingly would I ease my most sweet Jesus of this his labour! O Lord Jesu my most lovely Saviour, permit me to perform some service to thy Mother; but if thou wilt not grant me this, yet at least give me leave, that whilst thou servest thy Mother, I may serve thee.* And he tells us afterward, that, *God is in other creatures after a threefold manner, by his essence, by his presence, and by his power; but in the most Blessed Virgin after a fourth manner*, viz. *by identity, or being one and the self same with her.* Who could think that the worst should be yet behind? Let the reader judge whether it be or no. He farther saith, *That her seventh degree of excellency consists in this, quòd sit Domina dei, that she is the Mistress of God.* And then a line or two after, as if he had thought he had not yet sufficiently performed the part of a most impudent blasphemer, he adds that *supra ipsum thronum Dei solium suum collocavit, she hath erected her seat above the very throne of God.* This was a fellow that had improved to purpose the prayers he had learn'd of his holy mother. Surely she could not find in her heart to deny so passionately devout a worshipper of the Holy Virgin, a very considerable share in the merits of her *supererogations*: or rather may we not think that she would judge him so great a saint, as to stand in no need of them; and to have of his *own* to spare, wherewith to add to the riches of her treasury, for the relief of those who being conscious to themselves of being too dry and cold devotionists, can be perswaded to go to the charge of them?

Have we not now great cause to wonder, that the *Papists* should take it so very heinously at our hands, that we fasten upon them the imputation of *idolatry!* This very wretch would have been sensible of an unsufferable abuse, should one have call'd him *idolater*, as blasphemous a one as he was, and notwithstanding his having even *more than deified* a mere creature, and advanced her throne *above* her Creator's. Lord! to what heights of impiety will superstition lead men! and how thick is that darkness she blindeth the eyes of her captives with, that it will not suffer them to discern that guilt which is no whit less evident than the sun at noon. But,

Thirdly, the grossest instance of the *Church of Rome's idolatry* we have yet omitted; and that is their *worshipping the consecrated bread*, not as God's representative, but (which is far worse) as God himself, in the *sacrament of the altar* (as they call it) and on other occasions. This is no where to be parallel'd for the sottishness of it, no not among the most barbarous and brutish nations; it being founded upon the most absurd, contradictious, portentous and monstrous conceit, that ever entered the head of any mortal; as they have had it, to the confusion of their faces, proved to them by a multitude of learned persons of the reformed reli-

gion: who have also so fully, and with such mighty and irresistible strength made good the forementioned charge of *idolatry*, and of other impious practices and principles against them, that it is unimaginable how it should be possible, that any who are not stark-blind, or resolved that they will not see, should not acknowledge them. And as for the elaborate tricks whereby they endeavour to justifie themselves from those accusations, they may doubtless, whensoever they shall have a mind to it, devise others no less plausible with as little pains, to make forcing of virgins no rape, lying with other folk's wives no adultery, cutting of purses no theft, robbing of churches no sacrilege; and, in one word, they may with as little exercise of their brains invent ways to do whatsoever is most flatly forbidden in the Ten Commandments, without being guilty of transgressing any one of them.

I might proceed to instance in very many other doctrines of the *Romish* Church, which by what we have said of the Christian Religion we may be perfectly assured are *anti-christian*; but I will only add two or three more. As, their asserting the insufficiency of the holy Scriptures for men's salvation, and denying them to be the sole rule of faith, and joining with them their own paltry *traditions* as equally necessary to be believed; and this against the express words of S. *Paul* to *Timothy*, 2 *Epist.* 3 *Chap.* where he tells him, that *the holy Scriptures are able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* And that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throwly furnished unto all good works.* And their teaching that the Gospel is *obscure* and difficult to be understood even in things *necessary to be believed* and *practised.* Which, as it makes it greatly inefficacious for the purpose which we have proved it is designed for, so doth it open a gap for vile interpretations of any part of it, and exposeth it to the power of heretics, and especially of the *Romish* ones, to make it a mere nose of wax: which none can doubt, that consider also therewith their doctrine of *implicit faith*; and that other upon which it is grounded, *viz. That* of the *infallibility of their Church:* which, as the *Jesuits* define, is seated in the Pope's chair. But whether it be asserted that the Popes have an unerring faculty, or they and their general councils together, this doctrine being received (without the least ground) as unquestionably true, doth greatly hazard, nay, and even *necessitate* the betraying of men to the very worst both of opinions and practices, whensoever this pretended infallible guide shall be pleas'd to propose them. And whosoever believes it, must (to use the words of Mr. *Chillingworth*) be prepared in mind to esteem virtue vice, and vice virtue, Christianity anti-christianism, and anti-christianism Christianity, if the Pope shall so determine. And this doctrine, without doubt, is that which causeth those of the *Papists* to stick so fast in filthy mire, and to persist so obstinately in their foul errors, who are not detained therein by the love of gain (with which their Popes, and other ecclesiastics by the means of diverse of them are mightily enriched) or by the dear affection they bear to other lusts, which they are exactly fitted for the satisfaction of. Their doctrines being very many of them so ridiculously absurd, plainly false, and of such dangerous consequence; I say, nothing else, certainly, could hold the sincerer sort of *Papists* in the belief of

of them, but this consideration, that any one of them being let go, their great *Dagon* of the Churches *infallibility* must necessarily to the ground with it.

I might also instance in their doctrine of the *dispensableness of the most solemn oaths*, which is no less destructive to *humane society*, than it is to *piety*. And in that of the Pope's power to absolve subjects from their allegiance to their lawful sovereigns: and to them add a great number of maxims of the most famous order among them, the *Jesuits*, and resolutions of cases of conscience, which are as wicked and destructive of a holy life, as the devil himself can well devise. But to be employed with *Hercules* in emptying the *augean* stable, would be as acceptable a work as stirring so far in this nasty sink. Whosoever shall peruse the *mystery of jesuitism*, may find more than enough to turn his stomach, though it should be none of the most squeamish and queazy, and to make him stand astonished, and bless himself, that ever such loathsome and abominable stuff should come from persons that derive their name from the holy *Jesus*.

But to hasten to the conclusion of this chapter, the most pure and holy religion of our Saviour hath the *Church of Rome* defiled with as impure and unholy opinions and practices; and hath taken the most effectual course not only to render it a feeble and insignificant thing for accomplishing the design for which it was intended by the blessed founder of it, but also to make it unhappily successful in serving the directly contrary. The *great mystery of godliness* hath she transformed into a grand *mystery of iniquity*: and by that means mightily confirmed its professed enemies, the *Jews* and *Mahometans*, in their enmity against it. And for my own part, I should not stick to say, as did *Averroes* (when he observed that the popish Christians adored that they ate) *Sit anima mea cum philosophis*, *Let my soul take its fate with the philosophers*, did I think Christianity to be such a religion as she makes it. As much as I admire it now, I should then prefer that of *Socrates*, *Plato* and *Cicero* far before it. Though I abhor so far to imitate the *Papists* in their deviliſh uncharitableness, as to pronounce them all in a state of damnation, yet I dare assert with the greatest confidence, that all that continue in communion with that degenerate and apostate Church, run infinite hazards: and moreover that it is impossible, any *sincere* persons should give an *explicit* and *understanding assent* to many of her doctrines; but whosoever can find in his heart to *practise* upon them, can be nothing better than a shamefully debauched, and a most immoral wretch. Nor is it conceivable what should induce any to exchange the *reformed* for the *popish* religion (as too many have of late done) that have but a competent understanding of both, besides the desire of serving some corrupt interest. And we plainly see, that the generality of those that turn apostates from the Church of *England* to *that* of *Rome*, are such people as were a scandal to her, while they continued in her: and that *Atheism* and *Popery* are the common sanctuaries to which the most vicious and profane of this age do betake themselves.

CHAP. XVIII.

The third Inference.

That these two Sorts of Persons are extremely sottish. 1. *Such as expect to have their Share in the Salvation of the Gospel without true Holiness.* 2. *Such, much more, as encourage themselves by the Grace of the Gospel in Unholiness.*

THIRDLY, there is nothing we are more assured of by what hath been discoursed of the *Design of Christianity*, than that these two sorts of persons are guilty of extreme sottishness: namely, *Those that expect to have a share in the salvation of the Gospel without true holiness:* and much more, *Those that encourage themselves by the grace of the Gospel in their unholiness.*

First, *Those that expect to have their share in the salvation of the Gospel without true holiness.* I fear that such people are not confined within the limits of the *Romish* church; but that a great number of Protestants also may be deservedly accused upon this account. But by so much more sottish are *these* than the *Papists*, by how much *better* things *their* religion teacheth them than the *Papists* doth. Though I must likewise with sadness acknowledge, that too many opinions have been unhappily foisted into it, that give too great encouragement to a careless life. But that those which promise to themselves an interest in the salvation purchased by *Jesus* Christ, either from their baptism, and partaking of certain Christian privileges, or from their being of such or such a sect and mode of professors, or from their supposed orthodoxy and good belief, and zeal against erroneous doctrines, or from their imagining *Christ*'s righteousness *theirs*, and applying the promises to themselves, or from their abstaining from the grosser and more scandalous sins, or from their doing some externally good actions, and have in the mean time no care to be intirely obedient, to mortifie every lust, and to be indued with an inward principle of holiness; that those, I say, which thus do, are guilty of most egregious and stupid folly, is manifest from what hath been discoursed of the *Design of Christianity*.

For we have shewn, not only that reformation of life from the *practice*, and purification of heart from the *liking* of sin, are as plainly as can be asserted in the Gospel to be absolutely necessary to give men a right to the promises thereof; but also that its *great salvation* doth even *consist* in it: that, *salvation from sin* is the grand design of the Christian religion, and that *from wrath* is the result of it. I will instance in two more Scriptures for the farther proof of this. The Apostle S. *Paul* saith, *Ephes.* ii. 5, &c. *Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath he quickned us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are saved, through faith,* (or by the means of believing the Gospel) *and that not of your selves, it is the*

the gift of God. Where, by the *salvation* which the *Ephesian* Christians are said to have obtained, and in the bestowing of which the exceeding riches of God's grace appeared, is plainly to be understood their deliverance from their former heathenish impieties and sinful practices; and so is it interpreted by our best expositors. Again it is said, *Titus* iii. 5. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us* (how saved us? it follows) *by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Our Saviour giveth ease to our sin-sick souls by recovering them to health: and his salvation *first* consisteth in curing our wounds, and *secondarily* in freeing us from the smart occasioned by them. S. *Peter* tells the Christians, that *by his stripes they were healed,* 1 *Pet.* ii. 24. It being a quotation out of *Isaiah* liii. 5. *Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromat.* lib. ii. pag. 391. hath this saying to the same purpose ἡ συγγνώμη δὲ ἡ κατὰ ἄφεσιν ἀλλα κατὰ ἴασιν συνίσταται, *pardon doth not so much consist in remission as in healing*; that is, the pardon of the Gospel doth chiefly discover it self in *curing* men of their sins; in delivering sinners from the *power* of them, rather than from the mere *punishment* due to them. By which words that learned father declared that he looked upon the *subduing* of sin as a more eminent act of grace, than the bare *forgiveness* of it. Now, would that man be accounted better than an ideot, who being sorely hurt, should expect from his surgeon perfect ease, while he will not permit him to lay a plaister on his wound? Or that being deadly sick, would look that his physician should deliver him from his *pain*, when he will not take any of his medicines for the removal of the cause of it? But of far greater folly are all those guilty, who will not be perswaded to part with their *sins*, and yet hope for the salvation of their *souls*. He that looketh for this, expects that which implieth a most palpable contradiction, and is in its own nature impossible. It hath been fully enough shewn that mere deliverance from *misery*, cannot possibly be without deliverance from *sin*; and, *much* less eternal blessedness in the enjoyment of God.

Secondly, but how mad then are those, *which turn the grace of God declared in the Gospel into wantonness*, and take encouragement from the abundant kindness and good will therein expressed to sinners, with the more security and boldness to commit sin? We read of such in the epistle of St. *Jude*; and God knows there are too many such in these our days. But seeing it is so grosly foolish for men to hope to be saved, notwithstanding their living in the allowance of known sins, what desperate *madness* is it to be imboldened in ungodly practices, by the offers Christ makes of pardon and salvation to them. These declare that they look upon the *Design of Christianity* not only as different from what it hath been demonstrated to be, but also as directly *opposite*, and perfectly *contrary* thereunto. These must not only think their Saviour to be no *friend* to holiness, but to be even its greatest *enemy*, and a minister of sin and wickedness. They make him the chief servant of the devil, instead of coming *to destroy his works* (*a*). They make the *Christian* religion more vile by far than that of *Mahomet*; and such a religion, as those who are not the very work of men, must needs abominate. *Shall we sin* (faith the Apostle) *that grace may abound? God forbid!* (*b*). Those that think they

(*a*) 1 John iii. 8. (*b*) Rom. vi.

they can magnifie the free-grace of God in Christ by thus doing, or that they may take encouragement from it to continue in sin, do make this grace unworthy of men's acceptance, and therefore no grace at all. Nay, they make Almighty God the greatest enemy to mankind in sending his Son *Jesus* and his Gospel among us. For *sin* being so evidently the *greatest of evils*, it can be no other than the most significant expression of hatred to us, to encourage us to the commission thereof. It is so far from being part of our *Christian liberty*, to be delivered from our obligation to *all* or *any* of the laws of righteousness, that such a deliverance would be the most unsupportable yoke of bondage. If any man can be so silly as to object that of the Apostle, *Rom.* vi. 14. *Ye are not under the law, but under grace:* let him give himself an answer by reading the whole verse, and then make ill use of that passage if he can tell how. The words foregoing it are these: *sin shall not have dominion over you*, and these words are a proof hereof, *for ye are not under the law, but under grace:* that is as if he should say, It is the most inexcusable thing for you to continue under the dominion and power of sin, because ye are not under the weak and inefficacious pædagogy of the law of *Moses*, but a dispensation of grace, wherein there is not only *forgiveness* assured to truly repenting sinners, but *strength* afforded to enable to the subduing and mortification of all sin. Our Saviour hath told us expressly, that he came not *to destroy the law*, (that is, the *moral* law) *but to fulfil it* (*c*): and that *heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than that one jot or tittle thereof should fail.* And it is absolutely impossible, that our obligation thereunto should cease, while we continue *men*. All the duties therein contained being most necessary and natural results from the relation we stand in *to God* and *to one another*, and from the original *make* and *constitution* of humane souls.

But it is too great an honour to the doctrine of *libertinism* to spend two words in confuting it; it being so prodigious, so monstrous a doctrine, that it would be almost uncharitable to judge a professor of Christianity not to have suffered the loss of his wits who can have the least favour for it; supposing him to have but the least smattering in the Christian religion. It is an amazing thing, that such a thought should be entertained by such a one, while he is not utterly forsaken of his intellectuals; our Saviour's Gospel being wholly levelled at the mark of rendering us obedient to the laws of God. Let me speak to such as so shamefully abuse our incomparable religion, as to take liberty from thence to be in any kind immoral, in the words of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* ii. 4, 5. *Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that his goodness leadeth thee* (or designeth the leading of thee) *to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, &c.*

(*c*) Matt. v.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

The fourth Inference.

That a right understanding of the Design of Christianity *will give us the true* Notion, 1. *Of Justifying Faith*, 2. *Of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.*

FOURTHLY, from what hath been said of the *Design of Christianity* may be clearly inferred the *true Notion of Justifying Faith*, and of *the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.*

First, *Of justifying faith.* We thence learn, *That it is such a belief of the truth of the Gospel, as implies a sincere resolution of obedience unto all its precepts*; or (which is the same thing) implys *true holiness* in the nature of it: and moreover that it justifieth *as* it doth so. For surely the *faith* which intitles a sinner to so high a privilege as that of *justification*, must needs be such as complieth with *all* the purposes of Christ's coming into the world, and *especially* with his *grand* purpose; and it is no less necessary that it should justifie *as* it doth this; that is, as it receives Christ for a *Lord*, as well as for a *Saviour*. But I need not now distinguish between these two, there being but a *notional* difference between them in this matter. For Christ (as was shewn) as he is a *Saviour*, designeth our *holiness*: his *salvation* being *chiefly* that from the worst of evils, *sin*; and *principally* consisting in deliverance from the *power* of it.

I have scarcely more admired at any thing, than that any *worthy* men especially should be so difficultly perswaded to embrace this account of *justifying faith*; and should perplex and make intricate so very plain a doctrine. If this be not to seek knots in a bulrush, I know not what is. I wish there were nothing throughout the Bible less easily intelligible than this is, and I should then pronounce it one of the plainest of all books that ever pen wrote. For seeing the great end of the Gospel is to make men good, what pretence can there be for thinking, that *faith* is the *condition* (or I'll use the word [*instrument*] as improper and obscure as it is) *of justification*, as it complieth with only the precept of *relying on Christ's merits* for the obtaining thereof, especially when nothing is more manifest than that obedience to the *other precepts* must go before obedience to *this*; and that a man may not rely on the merits of Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, (and he is most presumptuous in so doing, and puts an affront upon his Saviour too) till he be sincerely willing to be reformed. And besides such a *reliance* is ordinarily to be found among unregenerate, and even the very worst of men. And therefore how can it be otherwise, than that *that act of faith* must needs have a hand in *justifying*, and the *special* hand too, which distinguisheth it from that which is to be found in such persons. And I add, what good ground can men have for this fancy, when our Saviour hath merited the pardon of our sins ofr this end, that it might be an effectual motive to forsake them? And can any thing in the world be more indisputably clear, than, if the only *direct* scope that Christianity drives at be the subduing of sin in us and

our freedom from its guilt or obligation to punishment be the consequent of this (as I think hath been demonstrated with abundant evidence,) that faith invests us with a title to this deliverance no otherwise than as *dying to sin*, and so consequently *living to God*, are the products and fruit of it? And seeing that one end, and the ultimate end too, of Christ's coming was to turn us from our iniquities, if the nature of *faith*, considered as *justifying* must needs be made wholly to consist in *recumbence* and *reliance on him*, he shall be my *Apollo* that can give me a sufficient reason why it ought only to consist in *reliance on the merits of Christ* for the *pardon* of sin, and not also on his *power* for the *mortification of it*. In short, is it possible that faith in Christ's blood for the forgiveness of sin should be the only act which justifieth a sinner, when so many plain texts assure us, that he died also to make us *holy*, and that his death was designed to deliver us from dying in order to a farther end, namely to this, that we should *live unto him who died for us*.

I will never more trust any faculty at reasoning, I can pretend to, no not in the plainest and most undoubted cases, if I am mistaken here. And will take the boldness to tell those who are displeased with this account of *justifying faith*, that (in my opinion) it is impossible they should once think of any other, if they ever seriously weighed and well considered the *Design of Christianity*. I the more insist upon this, because those persons explication of this point hath been greatly liable to be used to ill purposes by insincere persons; and hath given infinite advantage to the dangerous error of *Antinomianism*. And, for my part, I must confess that I would not willingly be he that should undertake to encounter one of the champions of that *foul* cause, with the admission of this principle, *That faith justifieth, only as it apprehendeth the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ:* I must certainly have great *luck*, or my adversary but little cunning, if I were not forced to repent me of such an engagement.

Secondly, and as for the other doctrine of *the imputation of Christ's righteousness;* we learn from *the Design of Christianity* that this is the true explication of it: namely, That it consists in dealing with *sincerely* righteous persons, as if they were *perfectly* so, for the sake of Christ's righteousness. The *grand* intent of the Gospel being to make us partakers of an *inward* and *real* righteousness, and it being but a *secondary* one that we should be *accepted* and rewarded as if we were *completely* righteous; it is not possible that any other notion of this doctrine should have any truth in it. For, as from thence it appeareth, that there can be no such imputation of Christ's righteousness offered in the Gospel, as serveth to make men remiss in their prosecution of an inward righteousness; so it is manifest likewise, That that doctrine is designed for a motive to quicken and excite men in their endeavours after such a righteousness as this is. So far is it from tending to cause in us an undervaluing and slight esteem of it, that, as sure as that the ultimate design of Christianity is to endow us with it, it must be intended for no other purpose but to farther and promote that business: and it is effectual thereunto in that manner, that we shewed the exceeding great and precious *promises* of the Gospel are.

But

But because both these points are discussed in the *free discourse*, I have said so little of the *former*, and will proceed no farther on *this*; but refer the reader thither, and to other much more elaborate discourses for his fuller satisfaction. And indeed it was enough for me in this place to shew, That the notion laid down in that book of each of these doctrines, doth evidently follow from the proposition which is the subject of this Treatise.

CHAP. XX.

The fifth Inference.

That we learn from the Design of Christianity *the great Measure and Standard, whereby we are to judge of Doctrines. How we are to judge of the* Truth *of Doctrines.*

FIFTHLY, we learn from what hath been said of the *design of Christianity*, what is the *great measure and standard whereby we are to judge of doctrines*; *both whether they are true or false, and in what degree necessary to be received or rejected.*

First, we understand how to judge of the *truth* of doctrines. We may be certain that, seeing the *design of Christianity is to make men holy*, whatsoever opinions do either *directly*, or in their *evident consequences*, obstruct the promoting thereof, are absolutely false; and with as great peremptoriness and confidence as they may be by some that call themselves Christians obtruded upon us, they are not of Christ, nor any part of his religion. And those which do *appear* to us to discourage from serious endeavours after piety and true goodness, we ought for that reason, while we have such an opinion of them, most vehemently to suspect them. For it being the business of our Saviour's coming into the world, or of his blessed Gospel, effectually to persuade us to use our utmost diligence in subduing our lusts, and qualifying our souls by purity and holiness for the enjoyment of God, and to make our endeavours *successful* for that purpose; we may be assured that he hath not either by himself immediately, or by his apostles, delivered any thing that opposeth this design. If (saith St. *Paul*) *I build again the things that I destroyed, I make my self a transgressor* (*d*): and no man that hath in him the least of a Christian, will once suspect, that the perfectly *wise* as well as *holy* Jesus should so manage the business he hath undertaken, as what he builds with one hand, to pull down with the other; and frustrate that design by *some* doctrines which he promoteth by *others*.

Those doctrines, on the other hand, which in their own nature do evidently tend to the serving of this design of Christianity, we may conclude are most true and genuine: and for those which, upon our serious considering of them, we are persuaded do so, we ought upon that account

(*d*) Gal. ii.

count to have a kindness, and to believe them of an higher than *humane* original. And therefore those which give the most honourable accounts of God, his nature, and dealing with the sons of men; that most magnifie his grace, and best vindicate his holiness, justice, and goodness, do commend themselves to our belief with infinite advantage: because the *most worthy* conceptions of the Deity are exceedingly *helpful*, and also *necessary* to the loving of God, and serving him as becometh us, and have a mighty influence unto the ordering and regulation of our whole man; as might be largely shewn.

Those doctrines, again, that most discountenance all sins both against the first and second table, and best enable to answer all pleas and pretences for security and carelessness; that are most agreeable to the innate dictates of our minds, and least gratifie and please our carnal part; we may from the consideration of the *design of Christianity* be greatly perswaded of the *truth* of them.

And, on the contrary, those which are apt to instil into men's minds any unlovely notions of the divine nature, that disparage his holiness, or lessen his kindness and good will to his creation, and the obligations of the generality of the world to him, and his Son *Jesus*, and so make his grace a narrow and scanty thing; or that naturally cast any dishonourable reflections on any person of the most Holy Trinity, must needs be *false*. As those that make religion to be a mere *passive* thing, wholly *God's work*, and not at all *ours*; or that cramp men, and perswade them that they are utterly void of the least ability to co-operate with the grace of God, or to do any thing towards their own salvation; or any way whatsoever discourage them from the diligent prosecution of holiness; or deprive us of any help afforded us towards our gaining, and growth in grace, either by putting a slur upon the written word, in advancing above it the *light within men*, and in *enthusiastical* pretences to immediate revelations, &c. or else by teaching men to slight any one ordinance of the Gospel, &c. or such doctrines as tend to introduce confusion into the Church of Christ, and to deprive it of all government and order, or in short, that give countenance to any immorality whatsoever: I say, as sure as the Christian religion is true, and that what we have proved to be the design thereof, is so, such doctrines as these must needs be *false*.

What our Saviour saith of false prophets, is as true of most doctrines, *by their fruits you shall know them*: we may understand whether they have any relation to Christianity or no, by the design they drive at, and their evident consequences.

And I may add, that we may make a shrewd guess what those *particular ways and modes of religion* are (which the various sects we are cantonized into have espoused to themselves, and are so fond of) by the proper and most distinguishing effects of them. If we perceive that they make the great sticklers for them to differ from others chiefly in unconcernedness about the most important and substantial duties of *morality*, and in laying the greatest weight upon certain little trifles, and placing their religion in mere *externals*; or that the things whereby they are most peculiarly discriminated from other folk are spiritual pride, and fond conceitedness of themselves, and a fierce or scornful behaviour towards those that approve not of their way; uncharitableness, morosity, and peevishness;

nefs; a seditious, ungovernable and untameable spirit, &c. I say, if we observe such as these to be the most distinguishing effects of their several modes and forms, we have sufficient reason from thence alone greatly to presume, that they have not the stamp of *jus Christianum* upon them, that they are not of Christ, but of their own invention. The wisdom that is from above is quite another thing, and begets perfectly other kind of fruits; as shall be shewn hereafter.

But to return, *the design of the Gospel* is (as was said) the great standard by which we are to judge of the *truth* of opinions: those that *seem* to us to oppose this design, we are bound to *suspect*, because they do so; but those which *apparently do this*, we must with heartiest indignation reject. And though we should meet with some places of Scripture that at first sight may seem to favour them, we may not be stumbled upon that account, but be confident that whatsoever is their true meaning, as sure as they have God for their author, they cannot possibly patronize any such doctrines.

And, lastly, in examining which of two opinions is true, that oppose each other, and do seem to be much alike befriended by the holy Scriptures, it is doubtless a very safe course to consider as impartially as we can, which doth tend most to serve the great end of Christianity, and to prefer that which we are persuaded doth so.

CHAP. XXI.

How we are to judge of the Necessity *of Doctrines, either to be embraced or rejected. A brief Discourse of the Nature of Points* Fundamental. *How we may know whether we embrace all such, and whether we hold not any destructive and damnable Errors.*

SECONDLY, *the design of Christianity is the great measure* whereby we are to judge, as of the *truth*, so also of the *necessity of doctrines either to be embraced or rejected.*

First, we may thereby understand, in what degree we ought to esteem those *necessary to be by all received*, which we ourselves are convinc'd of the *truth* of; or, which of such are *fundamental points* of the Christian faith, and which not.

First, it is plain, That in the general those and those only are *primarily* and in their own nature *fundamentals*, which are absolutely necessary to accomplish in us that design. Such as without the knowledge and belief of which, it is impossible to acquire that inward righteousness and true holiness which the Christian religion aimeth at the introduction of. It is in it self absolutely necessary, not to be ignorant of, or disbelieve, any of those points, upon which the effecting of the great business of the Gospel in us doth necessarily depend. The particulars of these I shall not stand to enumerate, because (as will appear from what will be said anon) it is not needful to have a just table of them: and, besides, any

one

one that understands wherein the nature of *true holiness* lieth, may be able sufficiently to inform himself what they are.

Secondly, it is as evident, That those points of faith, are *secondarily fundamental*, the disbelief of which cannot consist with true holiness, in those to whom the Gospel is sufficiently made known; although they are not in their own nature such, as that holiness is not in some degree or other attainable without the belief of them. And in the number of these, are all such points as are expresst with indisputable clearness. Now the belief of these, though it is not in it self any more than in higher or lower degrees profitable, yet it is absolutely necessary from an external cause, *viz.* in regard of their being delivered with such perspicuity, as that nothing can cause a man to refuse to admit them, but that which argueth him to be stark nought, and to have some unworthy and base end in so doing. But we must take notice here, that nothing worded at all doubtfully, can be of equal necessity to be received by all Christians; because that in regard of the diversity of men's capacities, educations, and other means and advantages, some things may be plainly perceived by one to be delivered in the Scriptures, which cannot be so by another

And in the second place, what hath been said of *fundamental truths*, is applicable by the rule of contraries to the opposite *errors*, as I need not shew.

Now then, would we know whether we embrace *all the fundamentals* of Christianity, and are guilty of no damnable and destructive errors; among the great diversity and contrariety of opinions that this kingdom abounds with (I think I may say) above all other parts of Christendom; our only way is to examine our selves impartially after this manner.

Am I sincerely willing to obey my Creator and Redeemer in all things commanded by them? Do I entertain and harbour no lust in my breast? Do I heartily endeavour to have a right understanding of the holy Scriptures, and chiefly of the Gospel, and to know what doctrines are delivered there in order to the bettering of my soul by them, and the direction of my life and actions according to them?

If we can answer these questions in the affirmative; whatsoever *mistakes* we may labour under, they can be none of them such as will undo us; because we may conclude from thence, that the *Design of Christianity* is in some good measure accomplished in us. And whatsoever tenets may be accompanied and consist with the true love of God, and a solicitous care to keep a conscience void of offence towards him and men, we may be certain from the past discourse of the *design of the Gospel*, that they belong not to the catalogue of *fundamental errors*. This obedient temper is the most infallible mark (of any I know) of an *orthodox* man; he that is endowed with it, though he may *err*, cannot be an *Heretic*.

But there will be an occasion of speaking more anon to this argument.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

The sixth Inference.

That the Design of Christianity *teaches us what Doctrines and Practices we ought, as Christians, to be most zealous for or against.*

SIXTHLY, we consequently learn *what doctrines and practices we ought, as Christians, to be most zealous for or against.* Those, surely, that are most available to the begetting and encrease of true holiness, it is our duty to concern our selves most for the defence of: and those which have the greatest tendency towards the endangering of it, to set our selves with the greatest industry and vigour against. The reason is plain, because the *former* do most promote the design of the Gospel, and the *latter* do it most disservice. St. *Jude* exhorts in the third verse of his epistle, *to contend earnestly* for the faith *which was once delivered to the saints*; that holy doctrine which was first delivered by our Saviour, and unanimously by his apostles after him; which is perfectly contrary to the wicked and abominable doctrines taught by the prophane crew he speaks of in the next verse (and were more than probably the *Gnostics*) which *were crept in unawares, who were before ordained to this condemnation*, (or whose *impostures* first, and then the *vengeance* which should be taken of them, were *formerly written of* or *foretold* both by Christ and his apostles) *ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* And we ought to contend against whatsoever is designed to overthrow and make ineffectual that most blessed doctrine, more or less, according as it more or less tends so to do. Our zeal should be altogether employed for the promoting of *personal* or *real holiness*, and mostly for the *essential* parts of it, and the *necessary* means and helps to it. But doubtless it cannot be worth our while to lay out any considerable matter of our heat, either for or against *doubtful opinions, alterable modes, rites* and *circumstances of religion*: they are not things on which much weight may be warrantably laid; for they are too weak to bear it, in regard of their being so little serviceable or disserviceable to the *Design of Christianity*. I say, eager defending or opposing of such kind of things, is (to use the similitude of an excellent person) like the apes blowing at a glow-worm, which affords neither light nor warmth. Nay, it is no less *injurious* to the *Design of Christianity*, than unserviceable and useless, as we have been effectually taught by very woful experience. And nothing doth more harden Atheistically-disposed persons, than their observing the contention of Christians about matters of that nature; for thereby do they take a measure of our whole religion. And besides an eager concernedness about them is too ordinarily accompanied with a luke-warm, or rather frozen indifference, concerning the most *important* points of Christianity. It is too visibly apparent to be denied, That those which have such a *scalding hot zeal* either for or against things of *no certainty*, and *no necessity*, are many of them (as their predecessors the *Pharisees* were) in the very *other* extreme as to not a few of the *weightiest* matters of religion.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

The seventh Inference.

That the Design of Christianity *well considered, will give us great Light into the just Bounds and Extent of Christian Liberty. Of complying with the Customs of our Country, and the Will of our Governours. The great Difference between the* Mosaical *Law and the* Gospel, *as to its preceptive Part.*

SEVENTHLY, we may be greatly satisfied, by considering the *Design of Christianity*, concerning the *just bounds and extent of our Christian liberty*. For that being to make men *holy*, it may safely be presumed, that such things as have neither directly, nor consequentially, any tendency to the depraving of our souls, are left free to us by our Saviour, either to do them or not to do them, as we shall see cause. Whatsoever doth neither promote nor hinder *this design*, we have reason to believe is neither enjoyn'd upon us Christians, nor forbidden to us.

Whatever things are any way *necessary* to the furtherance of it, must needs be matter of strict duty; and what are so profitable thereunto, that the omission of them doth make the effecting of this design more difficult, cannot but be *ordinarily* so also. Whatsoever is *in its own nature*, or by reason of some *circumstance inseparably adhering to it*, a *necessary* occasion of gratifying some one or other corrupt affection, and *that*, by the doing of which we shall *certainly defile* our own souls, or the souls of others, either by drawing them thereby to, or hardening and encouraging them *in* any sin, (which is that our Saviour means by *offending* or *scandalizing little ones*, and is so severely forbidden by him, and also by the Apostle in the eighth chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*) can be no other than absolutely unlawful: and whatsoever is foreseen to be a *probable* occasion of any one of these mischiefs, must also be carefully avoided by us. But those things which are none of all these, cannot be otherwise than perfectly *indifferent* under the Gospel.

And therefore whatsoever of such are commended by the custom of the places we live in, or commanded by superiors, or made by any circumstance convenient to be done; our Christian liberty consists in this, that we have leave to do them. And, indeed, it is so far from being a sin to comply with our country-men and neighbours in their plainly innocent usages and harmless customs, or with the will of our governors when they command us such things; that it would be so, to refuse so to do. For our refusing to comply with either of these can hardly proceed from any thing better than a proud affectation of singularity, or at best from superstitious scrupulosity; which, in calling it *superstitious*, I intimate to be evil, as much of conscience as there may be in it. For *superstition* implieth a frightful or over-timorous apprehension of the Deity, and consequently an unworthy conception thereof, as the Greek word δεισιδαιμονία signifieth. That which makes men *superstitious*, is such an opinion

pinion of God as represents him a very angry and captious Being, but et such a one too as may be atoned and pacified by a great care and ex-ctness in certain little matters, in performances and abstinences of an significant and very trivial nature.

Now the ancient author of the epistle to *Diognetus* acquaints him that he *primitive Christians* were no such squeamish or conceited people, as to ve in a different way from those among whom they inhabited; and saith hat they distinguished themselves from their neighbours and other folk, τε φωνῇ, ὅτε ἔθεσι, *neither by civil customs, nor a certain language*, (or phrases r *tone*) *proper to themselves*, ὅτε βιον παράσημον ἀσκῶσιν, &c. *nor that they ffected to make themselves notified by any peculiarities* (that is, in harmless natters) as a foolish sect among our selves, and some other fanciful people, ow a-days do.

I design not here so tedious a work, as that of examining particulars by the rule we have given, but only to shew in the general that we may be satisfied concerning the *extent of our Christian liberty* by well weighing he *Design of Christianity*, and may understand what kind of things must needs be free to us under the Gospel-dispensation, and what not; leaving it to the reader to make application, and consider the nature of particulars by comparing them with this rule. But I presume I need not mind him, that I suppose all this while that whatsoever is plainly commanded and forbidden in the Gospel, must be done and forborn by him, though he should not be sagacious enough to discern how every thing here commanded is serviceable, or forbidden is injurious, to the design of holiness; for surely none can doubt, but that they ought to understand me in what I have asserted, to have this meaning only, *viz.* That, as to those things which the Gospel speaketh nothing in particular and clearly, concerning the best course we can take in order to our knowing to what heads to refer them (whether to that of things *commanded*, or to that of *forbidden*, or to that of *indifferent things*) is to examine them by this general rule, *viz.* *The Design of Christianity.*

But to conclude this, the great difference between the *Mosaical* law, and the *Gospel*, as to its preceptive part, is this, That by the *former* a vast multitude of perfectly *indifferent* things were imposed, and many such also prohibited: but by the *latter*, only those things are injoyned that are in their own nature of indispensable necessity, or such as are means and helps towards them: and there is nothing thereby forbidden, but it is so, because it is evil; and is not therefore evil only because forbidden. There is nothing either commanded or forbidden in our Saviour's religion, but, as it is in order to our good, so is it in order to *such* a good too as consists in the reformation and renovation of our lives and natures.

So that, I say, our past discourse concerning *the Design of Christianity* may give us great light as to the knowledge of what kind of things, we that are under the Gospel-dispensation, *must do*, and are matter of *necessary* duty; *must not do*, and are matter of sin; and *may do* or *leave undone* without sin.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

The eighth Inference.

That it is the most unaccountable thing to do that which is essentially Evil, in defence of the Christian Religion, or of any Opinions presumed to be Doctrines relating thereunto. The Pope and Church of Rome *most highly Guilty in this Particular. And not a Few of those that profess Enmity against Popery too liable also to the same Charge.*

EIGHTHLY, it may be plainly inferred from what hath been said of the *Design of Christianity*, *That it is the most strangely unaccountable thing for men in defence or favour of that way of religion, which they take to be most truly the Christian, or of any opinions that are presumed by them to be doctrines thereunto belonging, to do that which is essentially and in its own nature evil.* For these act quite contrary to *the Design of the Christian religion*, and so consequently, do what lyeth in them to spoil it, and render it a vain and insignificant thing by the course they take for the advancement thereof. The *Pope* and *Church of Rome* are horribly guilty of this madness; they doing the most plainly vicious and immoral actions imaginable, to promote the interest (as they pretend) of that which they call *the Catholic faith*. For, their imposing of their own fences upon the word of God, and then persecuting, burning and damning men for not subscribing to *theirs* as to God's words, can be no better than an act of deviliſh pride and barbarous cruelty. It is so of the former, in that it is a compelling men to acknowledge their *wisdom* to be such as may not be suspected in the least measure, no not in the determination of points that are the most doubtful and disputable; nay, neither in such opinions and practices of theirs, as most plainly contradict abundance of texts of holy Scripture.

And moreover in endeavouring to force all men to act and think as they do in matters of religion, they with *Luciferian* arrogance usurp the empire of Almighty God, and sway that scepter over men's consciences which is his peculiarly.

And I need not say, that they are therein no whit less *cruel* than *proud*. For what greater cruelty can there be, than to inflict upon people the saddest of calamities and the horridest tortures (whereof the instances are innumerable) for such things as they have no cause to think they are able to help; and which they have also the greatest reason to conclude they are not at all blame-worthy for? I say, what can be greater cruelty than this? except their designing thereby to terrifie men to the owning of doctrines and doing actions perfectly against the clearest sence of their minds, and expressest dictates of their consciences; which is an exercise of no less cruelty towards their *souls*, than the other is toward their *bodies*.

And what villanies have the Pope and his party stuck at for the propagation of their religion? Such as exciting subjects to take arms against their lawful sovereigns; poysoning and stabbing of princes: the

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most barbarous massacres that any history can give account of. In short, what frauds and perfidiousness, what treachery, what impostures, what perjuries, what cruelties and horrid outrages, have they thought too wicked to be undertaken and persisted in, for the sake of HOLY CHURCH?

But I would I could say, that of all that are called Christians, the *Papists* only are liable to this charge; but, alas, it is too manifest to be denied, or dissembled, that not a few of those that profess enmity to popery are sadly guilty, though not *equally* with the *Papists*, in this particular. But there is nothing more self-evident than that to be of a persecuting spirit, to be wrathful and furious, to backbite and slander, to be false and perfidious, to be ungovernable, to be uncharitable, or in any kind whatsoever unjust, upon any account whatsoever, is most inexcusable and intolerable. For if upon any account such things could be lawful, religion would be the most useless thing in the world; and if they were lawful upon the account of religion only, it would not be a more useless and unprofitable than a mischievous thing. And therefore it would be too little a thing to say, that the *Christian* religion it self would be unworthy of our esteem, as great things as have been said of it, if it gave us leave to allow our selves in any immorality.

But there are none, it more absolutely or with greater severity forbiddeth than such as the fore-mentioned. *Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you?* (saith S. James.) *Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom; but if ye have bitter envyings and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth,* (that is, do not boast of your Christian wisdom, nor play the hypocrites in pretending to be spiritual) *this wisdom descendeth not from above* (is not zeal kindled from heaven) *but is earthly, sensual, devilish: for where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisie: and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace,* James iii. 13. to the end.

And S. *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, chap. v. 22, 23. That *the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* And he reckoneth among the works of the flesh, *verse* (19, 20, 21. not only *adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, heresies, murthers, drunkenness, revelling:* but also, *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envyings:* and saith, *that they which do such things* (such as *these* as well as the *former*) *shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* And adds, *verse* 24. That *they which are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,* that is, the foregoing, and all other.

And it appeareth from what hath been said of the *Design of Christianity*, that the gratification of any of these affections is so far from becoming lawful, or more warrantable, by being yielded to for the sake thereof, that it is rendered the more wretchedly foolish and unaccountable by this means. For thus to do, is to be *irreligious* to promote *religion*, to be *un-christian* to do service to *Christianity*; and therefore to go the directest way to *destroy it*, by the means we use for its *preservation*. And

we do our particular opinions and forms of religion more mischief, in alienating the minds of others from them, by such wild expressions of zeal, than their adversaries will be able to do, by all their attempts against them. And lastly, thus to do is to oppose the interest of our *religion* to that of our *souls*, and to cast *these* away in the defence of *that*: as appears from our discourse in the second Section. But what madness is like to this?

CHAP. XXV.

The Ninth Inference.

That it is a most unwarrantable Thing for the Ministers of Christ to prefer any other Design before that of making Men really righteous and holy. That this ought to be the whole Design of their preaching. That it is of as great Concernment that they promote the same Business by their Conversations, as that they do it by their Doctrine. Infinite Mischiefs occasioned by the loose Lives of Ministers. Several Instances of Practices extremely blame-worthy in Preachers of the Gospel. That they ought to have a Regard to the Weaknesses of Persons so far as lawfully they may. That the Promoting of Holiness *ought to be the only Design of ecclesiastical Discipline.*

NINTHLY, seeing our Saviour's *grand design was to make men really righteous and holy, it must needs be a most unwarrantable thing for those that are his ministers to prefer any other before this; for those that are intrusted with the care of souls to concern themselves about* any *thing so much as* this.

It is plainly their duty to subordinate every thing they do, by virtue of their sacred function, hereunto; and to imitate their great Master, all they can, in the discharge of it; to promote *holiness*, as much as lyeth in them, both by their doctrine and conversations: with all perspicuity and plainness to instruct their people in the indisputable doctrines of Christianity above any other; and to have a special care to shew them the aptness that is in them, to the furtherance of holiness of heart and life: and most to inculcate those upon them which have the greatest and most manifest and immediate tendency thereunto: to inform them of their whole duty relating to God, their neighbour and themselves impartially: to press them to the performance of them with the greatest affection and fervency; and to back on their exhortations with the most prevalent and inforcing motives; the most rational and convincing arguments; courageously, but with a discovery of tendereſt compassion to sinners, to reprove all sins without exception: and faithfully to shew the danger of living in any one whatsoever. And to do thus, not only in *publick*, but as there is occasion, in private also, and readily to embrace all opportunities for that purpose.

Thus (as hath been shewn) did our blessed *Saviour* spend his time and

and that it is the duty of his ministers to come as near as they can, in their practice, to him, is out of question: and thus also did his immediate successors, the apostles, employ themselves; as might be largely made to appear. They preach'd the word, were *instant both in season and out of season, they reproved, rebuked and exhorted with all long-suffering and doctrine*; according as S. *Paul* charged *Timothy* to do, in the most solemn and severe manner: even *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom.* And that charge, by parity of reason, must concern the whole Clergy as well as that Bishop.

And as Christ and his apostles taught men by their *lives*, as well as *doctrine*, and encouraged them to the performance of whatsoever duties they injoyned them, by their own example; so it cannot but be of infinite concernment that all that have the conduct of souls committed to them should do the like. S. *Paul* exhorted *Timothy* first *to take heed to himself*, and then *to the doctrine* (*e*); and the former advice was of no whit less necessity and importance than was the latter. For (as woeful experience assureth us) a minister of a careless and loose life, let his parts and ability in preaching be never so great, nay, though he should behave himself never so faithfully in the pulpit, and be zealous against the very vices he himself is guilty of (which would be very strange if he should) must needs do more *hurt* incomparably, than he can do *good*. And tho' (as some of them will tell them) it is the people's duty to do as they *say*, and not as they *do*; yet is there nothing more impossible than to teach them effectually that lesson. Mankind (as we had before occasion to shew) is mightily addicted to imitation, and *examples* (especially those of governours and teachers) have a greater force upon people ordinarily than have *instructions*; but chiefly *bad examples* (in regard of their natural proneness to vice) than *good instructions*. Had not the apostles expressed as great a care of what they *did*, as of what they *said*, how they *lived* as how they *preached*, Christianity would (without doubt) have been so far from prevailing and getting ground as it hath done; that it could not have long survived its blessed Author, if it had not bid *adieu* to the world with him. Most men, do what we can, will judge of our sermons by our conversations, and if they see *those* bad, they will not think *these* good; nor the doctrines contained in them practicable, seeing they have no better effect upon those that preach them. And indeed no man will be thought to be serious and in good earnest in pressing those duties upon others, which he makes no conscience of performing himself.

Nay, every man's judgment in divine things may warrantably be suspected, that is of a wicked and vicious life. And those that are conscious to themselves that they are not able to pass a judgment upon doctrines, may not be blamed if they question their minister's orthodoxy, while they observe in him any kind of immorality, and see that he lives to the satisfaction of any one lust. For, the promise of *knowing the truth* is made only to such *as continue in Christ's words*, that is, that are obedient to his precepts.

And I add, that such a one's talk of heaven and hell are like to pre-

(*e*) 1 Tim. iv. 16.

vail very little upon his auditors, or to be at all heeded by the greatest part of them, while they consider that the preacher hath a soul to save as well as they. And therefore the love that they bear to their lusts, with the devil's help, will easily perswade them, that either these things are but mere fictions, or else that the one may be obtained, and the other escaped, upon far easier terms than he talks of. But as for those few in whom the sense of true virtue and piety have made so deep an impression, as that they have never the slighter opinion of the necessity thereof, in regard of their minister's wicked example; the prejudice that they cannot but conceive against him, renders his discourses insipid and unaffecting to them, and so they ordinarily take all opportunities to turn their backs upon him, and at length quite forsake him. And then, if they are not as *understanding* as *well meaning* people, are too easily drawn away from all other churches, when they have left their own, and become a prey to some demure and fairly pretending sectary. And I am very certain from my own observation, that no one thing hath so conduced to the prejudice of *our* church, and done the separating parties so much service as the scandalous lives of some that exercise the ministerial function in her. The late excellent Bishop of *Down* and *Connor* hath this memorable passage in a sermon he preached to the university at *Dublin*: *If ye become burning and shining lights, if you do not detain the truth in unrighteousness, if ye walk in light and live in the spirit, your doctrine will be true, and that truth will prevail: but if you live wickedly and scandalously, every little schismatick will put you to shame, and draw disciples after him, and abuse your flocks, and feed them with colocynths and hemlock, and place heresie in the chair appointed for your religion.* But to hasten to the dispatch of this unpleasant topick: wicked ministers are of all other ill-livers the most scandalous, for they lay the greatest stumbling block, of any whatsoever, before men's souls; and what our Saviour said of the Scribes and Pharisees, may in an especial manner be applied to *them*, *viz.* that *they will neither enter into heaven themselves, nor yet suffer them that are entring to go in*: so far are they from saving themselves and those that hear them. But I would to God, such would well lay to heart those sad words of our Saviour, *Luke* xvii. 1, 2. *It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come: it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea*, &c. And those words are not more effectual to *scare* them, than are these following of a Heathen, *viz.* *Tully*, concerning vicious philosophers to *shame* them into a better life: saith he in his *Tusculan Questions*, the second book, *Quotusquisque philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, &c. What one of many philosophers is there, who so behaves himself, and is of such a mind and life, as reason requireth; which accounteth his doctrine not a boast of science but a law of life; which obeyeth himself, and is governed by his own precepts? We may see some so light and vain, that it would have been better for them to be wholly ignorant, and never to have learned any thing: others so covetous of money, thirsty of praise and honour, and many such slaves to their lusts,* ut cum eorum vitâ mirabiliter pugnet oratio, *That their lives do marvellously contradict their doctrine.* Quod quidem mihi videtur esse turpissimum, &c. *Which to me seems the most filthy and abominable thing. For as he which professing himself a grammarian speaks barbarously, and who being desirous to be*

accounted a musician sings scurvily, is so much the more shame-worthy for his being defective in that the knowledge and skill of which he arrogates to himself; *so a philosopher* in ratione vitæ peccans, *miscarrying in his manners, is in this respect the baser and more wretched creature, that in the office of which he will needs be a master, he doth amiss*; artemq; vitæ professus delinquit in vitâ, *and professing the art of well-living, or of teaching others to live well, is faulty and miscarrieth in his own life.* Could this excellent Heathen thus inveigh against wicked philosophers, what satyr can be tart and severe enough for ungodly ministers of the glorious and most holy Gospel of the blessed Jesus? I will add one more saying of our Saviour's which he spake to his disciples, whom he was training up for the ministry, *Matt.* v. 13. *Ye are the salt of the earth*; *but if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

Well, I say that the design of our Saviour and his Gospel being to make men holy, those behave themselves infinitely disbecoming his ministers and the preachers of the Gospel, that live unholily; and so do all such also (as was at first intimated) as do not above all things endeavour the promoting and furtherance of that design. And of that number are those that are ever affecting to make people stare at their high-flown and bombast language, or to please their phansies with foolish jingles and pedantick and boyish wit, or to be admired for their ability in dividing a hair, their *metaphysical* acuteness and scholastick subtilty; or for their doughty dexterity in controversial squabble. And among such may those also, and those *chiefly*, be reckoned, that seek to approve themselves to their auditors to be men of mysteries, and endeavour to make the plain and easie doctrines of the Gospel as intricate and obscure as ever they are able: these are so far from endeavouring above all things to advance the *Design of the Gospel*, that it hath not any greater enemies in the whole world than they are. And to them I may add such as preach up free-grace and Christian privileges otherwise than as motives to excite to obedience, and never scarcely insist upon any *duties* except those of believing, laying hold on Christ's righteousness, applying the promises (which are really the same with *them*) and renouncing our own righteousness, which those that have none at all to renounce have a mighty kindness for. All which rightly understood, may, I grant, and ought to be preached; but to make the Christians duty to consist either wholly or mostly in those particulars, and especially as they are explained by not a few, is the way, effectually to harden hypocrites, and encrease their number, but to make no sincere converts.

Those again do nothing less than chiefly promote *the business of holiness*, that are never in their element, but when they are talking of the irrespectiveness of God's decrees, the absoluteness of his promises, the utter disability and perfect impotence of natural men to do any thing towards their own conversion, &c. and insist with great emphasis and vehemence upon such like false and dangerous opinions. And those may well accompany and be joyned with the foregoing, that are of such *narrow*, and therefore *unchristian* spirits, as to make it their great business to advance the petty interest of any party whatsoever, and concern themselves more about doing this, than about promoting and carrying on that wherein

consists the chief good of all mankind; and are more zealous to make proselytes to their particular sects than converts to a holy life; and press more exact and rigid conformity to their modes, than to the laws of God, and the essential duties of the Christian religion.

Such as all the forementioned have, doubtless, little cause to expect a *well done, good and faithful servant*, from the mouth of their Saviour at the last day; their practice being so very contrary to that of his (whose ministers they profess themselves to be) when he was in the world; and they making Christianity so perfectly different a thing from what he made it.

And furthermore, it is unquestionably the duty of all the stewards of the mysteries of God to take special heed that they do not by over-severe insisting on any little matters, and unnecessary things, give their people a temptation to conclude that they lay the greatest weight upon them; but so to behave themselves towards them, as to give them assurance that there is no interest so dear to them as is that of the salvation of their souls. And lastly, to be so self denying as to have a regard to the weaknesses of persons, so far as lawfully, and without disobeying authority they may, to prevent their departure from communion with the church they belong to; and to use all fair and prudent ways to perswade those back again thereunto, which there is any the least reason to hope are not irrecoverably gone away. It being very much the interest of their souls not to continue in separation: and not of *theirs* only but of *others* too, in that strifes and contentions, envyings and animosities are like to be kept alive, and greatly to increase, while men keep at a distance from one another; and where these are (as it was said S. *James* hath told us) there must needs be *confusion and every evil work*.

And this is no other than what the great S. *Paul* thought it no disparagement to him to be exemplary to us in. For, saith he, 1 *Cor.* ix. 19, &c. *Though I be free from all men, yet have I made my self a servant to all, that I might gain the more: and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law* (or observe not the law of *Moses*,) *as without law, that I might gain them that are without law: to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* The sum of which words amounts to this, That he denied himself in the use of his liberty to gain those who were not acquainted with the extent of it, and dealt with all sorts of men in that way which he thought most probable to convert them to Christianity, and keep them in the profession of it. Not that he sneaked and dissembled, and made weak people think he was of their mind, and so confirmed them in their mistakes and follies; or had any regard to the humours of unreasonable merely captious people that will be finding faults upon no ground at all: this must needs be unworthy of an Apostle; for it is so of all inferiour ministers, and of every private Christian too.

And our present discourse allures us also, that the promoting of holiness in men's hearts and lives ought to be the only design of ecclesiastical discipline and church censures: and 'tis easie to shew, that if the laws of all Christian churches were framed and the execution of them directed

only or *above any other*, to the service of this design; or that no interest did sway so much with their chief governours, as that which was (and still is) most dear to the great Founder and King of the church whom they represent; and if they were willing to lose in their little and petty concerns, that they might gain in this grand one, we should quickly see Christendom in most lovely and blessed circumstances. All people that have any thing of sincerity, would quickly unite and agree together, and as for factious hypocrites, they would be with ease suppress't, and put out of all capacity of doing mischief. This, I say, might be easily shewn, and plainly demonstrated; but it needs not, there being nothing in the world more undeniably evident.

CHAP. XXVI.

The Tenth Inference.

That an obedient Temper of Mind is an excellent and necessary Qualification to prepare Men for a firm Belief and right Understanding of the Gospel. That it is so by Virtue of Christ's Promise. That it is so in its own Nature. This shewed in three Particulars, viz. *in that*, 1. *It will help us to judge without Prejudice concerning the Doctrines contained in the Gospel.* 2. *It will give Satisfaction concerning the main Doctrines of Christianity far excelling any that can arise from mere Speculation.* 3. *It will secure from the Causes of Error in those Points that are of weightiest Importance. Six Causes of such Errors laid down; and an obedient Disposition of Mind shewed to secure from each of them.*

TENTHLY, *We learn what is the best temper and disposition of mind to bring to the study of Christ's Gospel, in order to our firm belief and right understanding of it.* Seeing its *design* is to make men *entirely obedient, and truly holy*, it is evident that a desire so to be is the most excellent and necessary qualification for that purpose. Our Saviour saith, *John* vii. 17. *If any man will do his will* (or is willing to do it) *he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self*; that is, in the first place, he shall be throughly satisfied concerning the truth of the Gospel, shall be abundantly convinced that the Christian religion is no imposture, that the author of it came from heaven, as he declared he did, and was sent by God to reveal his will. Such a one, when it comes to be sufficiently proposed to him, shall heartily embrace the Gospel as containing the true, the *only* true religion. And therefore observe what he saith, *John* viii. 47. *He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God:* That is, as if he should say, He that is of an obedient temper, and ambitious of doing the will of God, shall receive the doctrine which in his name I preach to him; and the reason why you *Jews*, for your parts, refuse so to do, is, because you are insincere and hypocritical.

It is said, *Acts* xiii. 48. That as many of the Gentiles as were τεταγμένοι, which is doubtless in this place to be rendred *disposed*, or *in a ready preparedness for eternal life*, *believed*; that is, those which were *proselytes of the gate*, who were admitted by the *Jews* to the hope of eternal life, and to have their portion in the age to come, without submitting to their whole law, or any more than owning the God of *Israel*, and observing the *seven precepts* of Noah (as master *Mede* hath learnedly shewn,) these being desirous to live godlily, and not prejudiced against the Christian religion as the *Jews* generally were, did then at *Antioch* receive the Gospel upon its first being made known to them. And of this sort was *Cornelius*, whose conversion to Christianity we read of before in the tenth chapter.

Secondly, and consequently, this sense is also implied in the first cited words of our Saviour, *viz.* That, as he which is willing to do God's will, shall know that Christ's doctrine came from him, so he shall rightly understand that doctrine too. For it would be to no purpose for him to believe the Gospel to be true, if his faith be not accompanied with an ability to pass a right judgment on the sense of it. And therefore he must needs be able to distinguish between the doctrine of Christ, and that which is falsly imposed at any time upon the world, as his, and fathered upon him by ungodly hereticks; as well as satisfied that what he delivered in the general is the will of God. S. *John* to this same purpose expresseth himself, 1 *Epistle* iv. 6. *He that knoweth God* (that is, practically, or is obedient) *heareth us*; *he that is not of God* (or is not willing to obey him) *heareth not us*; *hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error:* that is, by this obedient temper we are capable of distinguishing betwixt these two spirits. And, I say, from the *design of the Gospel*, that being to make men *holy*, it may be presumed, that whosoever considereth it with a desire of being so, must needs both believe it to have come from God, and also be inlightened in the true knowledge of, at least, all the necessary points of it; and be enabled to give a particular, explicite and understanding assent to them: so that it shall not lie in the power of any subtile seducer to rob him of his faith, or to infect him with any principles that are directly destructive to it, or are so plainly in their consequences so, as that he shall see it, and make that ill use of them as to be perswaded by them to let go his hold of any fundamental article of the Christian religion.

For our Saviour having so concerned himself for the destroying of sin in us, and to make us partakers of his holiness, as to aim at this above all things, in all he did and suffered in the world, and to make it the whole business of his Gospel; we may be certain that those *honest* souls that come to the study of it, with a desire of reaping *this* advantage by it, cannot be left destitute of Christ's grace and blessing to make it successful to them for that purpose; which it is impossible it should be without a thorow belief of it, and a right understanding of, at least, all its absolutely necessary and essential parts. This we might be assured of from that consideration, though there were no promise extant of that his grace to such well disposed people, as there are divers others besides that which we have produced.

But besides this, a sincere desire of being obedient and holy, must needs

needs *of it self* very greatly dispose us for the belief and sufficient understanding of the Gospel, and be very necessary in order thereunto also. For,

First, it will help us to judge without prejudice concerning it, and the particular doctrines therein contained. He whose hearty desire it is to please God in doing his will, will be unbyassed in his judgment in enquiries after it. He knows that he cannot make that to be truth by thinking one way or other, which was not *before* so; and that truth will be truth whatsoever he thinks of it: and therefore doth not wish that this or that may be so, and then endeavour to perswade himself that it is so; but will only examine what is so, that he may not entertain an erroneous perswasion. He will bring his mind to the Gospel, and not wrest the Gospel to his mind. But vice and sin, being allowed and predominant in the soul, must needs warp the judgment, and clap a heavy byass on it, that will draw it to favour, as much as may be, their interest in all matters it is concerned in. And therefore a man of wicked and depraved affections, cannot but be exceeding unapt to study a book whose design is such as the Gospel's is. But the obediently-disposed will bring free, ingenuous and candid spirits to this work, and therefore are very fitly prepared to do it with good success.

Secondly, this honest and sincere temper of mind will help a man to evidence for his satisfaction concerning the main doctrines of the Gospel, far excelling any that can arise from mere speculation; namely, that of *sense* and *experience*. The man that is indued with it, shall *know of the doctrine, that it is of God*, he shall not only *believe* it according to the strict notion of that phrase. There is an inward sweetness in holy truths that a good soul will relish, and savour, but the vitiated palates of those that are in love with any lust cannot taste it. *How sweet* (said *David*) *are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.* Now *naked demonstrations* give but very poor and slight satisfaction in comparison of that knowledge that ariseth from *sense* and *experience*; and this latter alone will remove from us all doubt and uncertainty. Therefore that was so far from being a *weak* and *foolish*, that it was a most *worthy* and *laudable* speech of the honest martyr, *Though I cannot dispute, I can dye for Christ.* No one that hath tasted honey, can at all doubt of its sweetness, though he may want cunning enough to answer the arguments whereby a sophister may attempt to prove it bitter. We say, *Seeing is believing.* And the great evidence that our Saviour proved himself to be the *Messias* by, was that of *sense*. By this was *Thomas* his incredulity, as very strong as it was, immediately overcome. And the *bodily* senses are not more infallible than is the *purified* sense of the *soul*.

Thirdly, The aforesaid temper of mind will secure, from the causes of error, in those points that are of weightiest importance. It is certain that mistakes about these cannot possibly arise from the obscurity of that book, it being as plain as heart can wish in all matters of absolute necessity; as hath been shewn in *the free discourse*. Therefore errors that are of a damnable nature must necessarily proceed from *vicious* causes, such as,

1. Gross ignorance; but 'tis not possible to find this in any soul that is sincerely desirous to obey God.

2. A too high opinion of our parts and reason: by which is often occasioned

sioned a rejection of whatsoever they are not able to comprehend. But the honest soul can have no such conceits of *his* reason; he knows nothing more undoubtedly than that he is a weak and shallow creature. He knows that the most contemptible insect, and common weed, are able to pose and put him to a *non plus*; and that it would therefore be the highest of arrogances in him to believe nothing revealed to him but what is an adequate object of his understanding. This man will submit his reason to divine revelation, and not divine revelation to his reason. 'Tis true he cannot, though he would never so fain believe that which doth manifestly *contradict* the reason of his mind, and the innate sense of his soul; but therefore it is certain that no such things are to be found in the Gospel, nor can be a matter of divine revelation.

3. Proud affectation of being thought wiser than other folk. This was a great thing which made the first hereticks that the Church of Christ ever knew, as appeareth by the arrogant title they assumed to themselves, and distinguished the sect by, *viz. Gnosticks.* But that temper of mind that makes men unfeignedly desirous of piety and virtue, is inconsistent with all such ambitious and aspiring thoughts.

4. Licorish curiosity and wantonness of spirit. When people are glutted with those wholesom truths which they have for many years been entertained with, and will be hunting after novelties; when they grow weary of their honest teachers, and will be following every upstart that sets himself in opposition to them; it can hardly otherwise be but that they must fall into dangerous errors. The Apostle saith, 2 *Tim.* iv. 3. that, *The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will they heap to themselves Teachers:* (But how comes it to pass that they will do thus? It followeth) *having itching ears.* But the obediently-inclined soul will be careful to keep in that good way, which by experience he hath found to be so, and to avoid all by-paths. Nor will he be running after seducers, but shun them all he can, as being conscious of his own weakness, and his aptness without the grace of God to be misled.

5. The love of, and being wedded to any one lust whatsoever, will certainly endanger men's falling into the worst of heresies. When men have some beloved sins or sin, which they are resolved they will not part with, and are as a *right eye* (*i*) or *right hand* to them, they are easily persuaded to entertain such principles as will allow them to live in them, and to abandon those that will not: and therefore to *wrest the Scriptures* (as those the Apostle speaks of, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16.) *to their own destruction*, and put them upon the rack to make them speak such things as may consist with the interest of their corrupt appetites. *Quod volumus, facile credimus*, that which we would have to be true, we easily believe is so; and what we desire should be false, we are with little difficulty perswaded to disbelieve. This, therefore, hath had so fearful an influence on not a few, as to cause them at length to throw away their BIBLES, to deny the immortality of their souls, and disbelieve as much as they can even the being of a Deity, because they are sensible that while they continue in their sins, it is infinitely their interest that the holy Scriptures should be false, that there

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(*i*) Mat. v. 29, 30.

there should be no other life, and no God. But I need not say, that the honest, obedient person is one that is not devoted to any lust.

6. The just judgement of God upon these and the like accounts, is the last cause I shall mention of men's disbelieving the Gospel, and renouncing any of the essentials of Christianity. *Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge,* (that is, to acknowledge him in their practice) *God gave them up to a reprobate* (or an adulterate, corrupted) *mind,* Rom. i. 28. *Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; God shall send them ἐνέργειαν πλάνης, strength of delusion, that they should believe a lye; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness,* 2 Thess. ii. 10. The forementioned particulars do of themselves lead to the most dangerous errors; how much more then must they needs so do, when they are backed with the divine vengeance? But if *honesty* and an *obedient* temper of soul will secure from the *other* causes of error and seduction, it will, in so doing, secure from *this last.*

So that it is manifest that a sincere desire of righteousness and true holiness, will not fail to help men to a thorow belief, and sufficient understanding of that book which is only designed to indue them with it: and that nothing can occasion the contrary, but a wilful adhering to some one or other immorality; and that this hath a very great aptness so to do. So that it is not the least matter of wonder, to see men of excellent wits, and brave accomplishments, either fall into gross errors, or even into a flat disbelief of the Christian religion. As strange as this may seem to some, it appears from our past discourse, that there is not any real cause of admiration in it. For other endowments, of as excellent use as they may be when accompanied with that of an obedient temper, must needs do more hurt than good to the souls that are adorned with them, when separated from it, and occasion those vices that may well make way for heresies. And it is certain that an acute wit, when it hath not a purified sense going along with it, is so far from being a sufficient prerequisite to the right understanding of evangelical truths, that it is as notable an engine as the grand deceiver can desire to make use of, in order to the bringing about his mischievous designs upon the person that is master of it. So that indeed, it is, on the contrary, rather matter of wonder, that any man that hath a naughty *will,* should have a good *judgement* in evangelical truths, though both his natural and acquired parts should be never so great. And again, we may without the least breach of charity presume, that whosoever, to whom Christianity is sufficiently made known, doth either disbelieve it, or any of the fundamentals of it, his *heart* is much more in fault than his *head,* and that he hath darkened his discerning faculty, and greatly dimmed the eye of his soul, by entertaining some filthy lust that sends up a thick fog and mist of vapours to it. *If any man teach otherwise* (saith S. *Paul,* 1 *Tim.* vi. 3.) *and consent not to wholsome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine that is according to godliness; he is proud,* &c. not he is *weak* and *cannot,* but he is *wicked* and *will not* understand the truth. And, by the way, this discourse may conduce to the no small encouragement of the weaker sort: let such be but heartily solicitous about doing God's will, and having the design of the Gospel effected in them, and they need not fear that their weakness will betray them into the wrong way to blessedness.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

The last Inference.

That we are taught by the Design of Christianity, *wherein the Essence, Power and Life of it consisteth. Instances of what Kind of Things it doth not consist in. For what Ends the several Exercises of Piety and Devotion are injoined. How God is glorified by men, and by what means. Whom it is our duty to esteem, and carry our selves towards, as true Christians. That by following the Example of Christ, and making his Life our Pattern, we shall assure our selves that the* Design of Christianity *is effected in us, and that we are indued with the Power thereof.*

LASTLY, We learn from the doctrine of the *Design of Christianity, wherein the Essence, Power and Life of it consisteth*, viz. In a good state and habit of mind, in a holy frame and temper of soul; whereby it esteemeth God as the chiefest good, preferreth him and his Son *Jesus* before all the world, and prizeth above all things an interest in the divine perfections; such as *justice* and *righteousness*, *universal charity*, *goodness*, *mercy and patience*, and *all kinds of purity*. From whence doth naturally proceed a hearty compliance with all the holy precepts of the Gospel; and sincere endeavours to perform all those actions which are agreeable to them, are necessary expressions of those and the like virtues, and means for the obtaining and encrease of them and to avoid the contrary.

The kingdom of God (or Christianity) *is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; as S. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* xiv. 17. That is, it doth not consist in any merely external matters, or bodily exercises, which (elsewhere he saith) *do profit but little* (*k*). And, not in such as he there meaneth, *viz.* things of an indifferent nature, and neither good nor evil; so neither in such as are very good and laudable for the matter of them. It is only their flowing from an inward principle of holiness, that denominateth any whatsoever *Christian* actions. But such as are only occasioned by certain external inducements and motives, and proceed not from any good temper and disposition of mind, be they never so commendable in themselves, speak not him that performeth them a true and sincere Christian. *He is not a Jew*, saith the same Apostle, *that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision that is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, that is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God*, Rom. ii. 28, 29. That is, he only is a true child of *Abraham*, who in the purity of the heart obeyeth those substantial laws which are imposed by God upon him. And if no one that doth not thus, might properly be called a *Jew* or child of *Abraham*, much less can the name of a *Christian* and a *Disciple of the holy Jesus* be due to him. He (it is evident) is only so, in whom the *Design of Christianity* is in some measure accomplish'd. And it appears from what hath been said, that its design is primarily

(*k*) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

marily and immediately upon the *nature*; which, being rectified and renewed, will certainly discover it self so to be throughout the *whole life. For a good tree will not bring forth corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree good fruit* (*l*), as our Saviour hath said. Were it possible (as it is not) that we should forbear all outward acts of sin, and yet our *souls* cleave to it, we could not but be destitute of the life and power of Christianity. And should we abound never so much in the exercise of good duties, if our design in so doing be to gratifie any lust, and serve some carnal interest, they will be so far from *Christian* actions, that they may be most truly and properly called *sins*. There is no one duty more affectionately recommended in the Gospel than is alms giving; but to give alms to be seen and praised by men, is no better than base hypocrisie (as Christ hath told us), so far is it from an expression of *Christian* charity. And whatsoever *materially* virtuous actions proceed not from the principle of love to virtue, though I cannot say that all such are hateful to God, yet they want that degree of perfection that is requisite to make them *truly Christian*. And it is a plain case, that he is not the Christian, that is much imployed in the duties, hearing God's word, reading the bible and other good books, &c. but he that discovereth a good mind in them, in whom the end of them is effected, and who is the better for them. This is the business for the sake of which *prayer* is enjoined. We are therein to acknowledge God's infinite perfections, and our obligations to him, that we may express our hearty sense of them, and in order to our being the more affected with *those*, and our having the more grateful sentiments of *these*. We are in that duty to address our selves to the divine Majesty, in the name of Christ, for what we want; that we may by this means both express and encrease our dependance on him, and trust in him for the obtaining thereof. And to confess and bewail our sins, to exercise godly sorrow and contrition of soul; and that by so doing we may be so much the more deeply humbled for them and have the greater averseness in our wills against them. The communion which we are to enjoy with God in prayer, is such as consisteth in being enamoured with the excellencies that are in him, and in receiving communications of his nature and spirit from him.

Therefore also are we commanded to hear and read God's word, that we may come thereby to understand, and be put in mind of the several duties he requires of us, and be powerfully moved to the doing of them.

And the like may be said concerning all the other exercises of piety and devotion, the end of them is more and more to dispose our hearts to the love, and our wills to the obedience of our blessed Creator and Redeemer. And busying our selves in any of them without this design, may well be counted in the number of the fruitless and unaccountable actions of our lives. Thus to do is prodigally to waste and mispend our time; as the Jews were upbraided by one of their adversaries, with doing, upon the account of their *Sabbath*, saying, *That they lost one day in seven.* And those that are most constant in their addresses to the Majesty of heaven, both in the publick and private worship of him, if they go into his presence with the entertainment and allowance of any sinful affection, they have never the more of the divine approbation upon that account. *If I regard*, saith *David, iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* God esteemeth no better

(*l*) Mat. vii.

better of such as do so, than as hypocritical fawners upon him, and falsehearted complimenters of him; and hath declared that their sacrifices are an *abomination* to him. The generality of the Jews were such a people: God by his prophet *Isaiah* speaks thus concerning them. *They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God. They ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God.* They were a people that loved to fast and pray, and afflict their souls, and to *make their voice to be heard on high:* but giving liberty to themselves in plain immoralities, God declared that all this was even hateful to him: as may be seen in the fifty-eighth of *Isaiah*. And he there likewise telleth them, that the *fast which he took pleasure in*, consisteth *in loosing the bands of wickedness, in undoing the heavy burdens, and letting the oppressed go free; in breaking every yoke; in dealing their bread to the hungry; and bringing the poor that are cast out, to their houses; in covering the naked*; and the exercise of strict justice, mercy and kindness. And in the first chapter, he asks them, *To what purpose the multitude of their sacrifices were* (though they were no other than he himself by the law of *Moses* required), and charged them *to bring no more vain oblations to him*; told them that *their incense was an abomination to him, their new-moons and sabbaths, and calling of assemblies he could not away with*, that *their solemn assembly was iniquity*; that *their new-moons and appointed feasts his soul hated*, and that *he was weary to bear them.* And all this because these were the only or main things they recommended themselves to him by; their religion chiefly consisted in them; and they gave themselves leave to be unrighteous, cruel and unmerciful, as may there be seen.

God abhors to see men come cringing and crouching before him, bestowing a great heap of the best words upon him, and the worst upon themselves, and with dejected countenances bemoaning themselves, and making lamentable complaints of their wickedness to him, imploring mercy and favour from him, &c. when they resolvedly persist in disobedience. So far are such things as these from being able to make amends for any of their sins, that God accounts them no better than additions to their most heinous impieties; as by the sixty-sixth of *Isaiah*, it further appeareth: it is said there, *He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.* And how came this to pass? it follows: *They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.* So that if he had such an opinion of the goodliest and most acceptable sacrifices, when offered by disobedient and immoral persons, under the *Law*; it is impossible that he should have one jot a better of the most affectionate devotions of those that take no care to be really and inwardly righteous, under the *Gospel*. And in being so, consists (as was said) the soul and life of Christianity.

Not that a *true Christian* can have undervaluing and slight thoughts of the external worship and service of God; nor that he can contemn or neglect praying to him, singing his praises, hearing or reading his word, &c. Nothing less: for by the serious and diligent performance of these and the like duties, he comes to acquire and encrease that good temper of soul that gives him the denomination of such a one, through the assist-

ance of the divine Grace. He is one, to speak in the words of *Hierocles*, as σπεύδει ἀ εὔχεται, ᾗ εὔχεται ἃ σπεύδει, *joyns endeavours to prayers, and prayers also* (with the other parts of divine worship) *to his other endeavours.*

And besides, the solemn acknowledgments of God, both in publick and private, are expressions of natural justice. *Quid aliud est pietas* (saith *Tully*) *quam justitia adversus Deos? What is piety or devotion but justice towards God?* And each of the significations of it, whether natural or positive, they are *payments of a due to him*; so that men cannot be so much as *honest*, and omit the honouring of the divine Majesty by them. But it is certain that these performances do him no honour at all, any otherwise than as they proceed from a good and sincere soul. And to this purpose our often cited philosopher hath this other excellent saying, *viz. The greatest abundance and profusest costliness of oblations bring no honour to God, except they are offered with a divine Mind: for the gifts and sacrifices of fools are but food for the fire*. Sacrifices* in ancient times were called the *food* of Almighty God, as being provision made for his house; but (saith the philosopher) when they proceed from fools (or wicked men) they are at best but the *fire's meat:* they signifie nothing to God, and are merely thrown away.

And indeed the best intelligible and most significant honour that our devoutest services bring to God, is by their being a means of making us more *like* to him. And as I shewed, out of the learned master *Smith's* treatise, *how God most glorifieth himself*, so I think it not amiss to transcribe more lines of that worthy person, wherein he excellently sheweth *how we must glorifie God*; and they immediately follow the former. Saith he, *pag.* 409. *As God's seeking his own glory in respect of us is most properly the flowing forth of his goodness upon us; so our seeking the glory of God is most properly our endeavouring a participation of his goodness, and an earnest uncessant pursuing after divine perfection. When God becomes so great in our eyes, and all created things so little, that we reckon upon nothing as worthy of our aims or ambitions but a serious participation of the divine nature, and the exercise of divine virtues,* love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, *and the like: when the soul beholding the infinite beauty and loveliness of the divinity, and then looking down and beholding all created perfection mantled over with darkness, is ravished into love and admiration of never-setting brightness, and endeavours after the greatest resemblance of God in* justice, love, *and* goodness, *when conversing with him* ἐν ἡσύχῳ ἐπαφῇ, *by a secret feeling of the virtue, sweetness and power of his* goodness, *we endeavour to assimilate our selves to him: then we may be said to* glorifie *him indeed. God seeks no glory but* his own, *and we have none of* our own *to give him. God in all things seeks himself and his own glory, as finding nothing* better *than himself; and when we love him above all things, and endeavour to be most like him, we declare plainly that we count nothing* better *than he is.*

See more to the same purpose, *pag.* 141, 142, 143. And this same excellent notion the *Pythagoreans* (however they came by it) did also teach. It was one of their sayings, *Thou wilt best glorifie God, by assimilating and making thy mind like to God* †.

And

* Ἡ τῶν προσφερομένων πολυτέλεια τιμὴ εἰς Θεὸν οὐ γίνεται, εἰ μετὰ τῆ ἐνθέου φρονήματος παρασκευῆς. Δῶρα γὰρ ᾗ θυηπολίαι ἀφρόνων ἐστὶν τροφή. *pag.* 25.

† Τιμήσεις τὸν Θεὸν ἄριστα, ἐὰν τῷ Θεῷ τὴν διάνοιαν ὁμοιώσῃς.

And I will trouble the reader with one more of our philosopher's sayings, which is no less worthy of his observation than any of the past recited ones, *viz. Thou canst not honour God in giving ought to him, but by becoming a meet and worthy person to receive from him* *.

And the great oracle of truth, our blessed Saviour, hath assured us, that, *herein is his Father glorified, that we bear much fruit* (*k*); that we are fruitful in all holiness. And we learn from St. *Paul*, *Phil.* i. 11. That they are the *fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ* (or the effects of his grace and Holy Spirit) which redound *to the praise and glory of God!* And then do we praise him most significantly and effectually, when we are *filled* (as there he prays the *Philippians* may be) *with these fruits*: when righteousness takes possession of our souls, grows and encreases in them, and exerts it self in our lives (as it must needs do wheresoever it is) and our whole conversation shine with it.

In short; *circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing*, (neither any opinions, nor performances, nor forbearances, that have no influence upon the soul and spirit, are any thing;) *but the keeping the commandments of God*: this is all in all. *In Christ Jesus* nothing at all *availeth* but such a *faith as works by love* (δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, or *is perfected by charity*) and *a new creature*. And *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*; and whosoever is a new creature, is in Christ or a true Christian. All which St. *Paul* hath plainly taught us, in 1 *Cor.* vii. 19. *Gal.* v. 6. 2 *Cor.* v. 17. Those in whom the *design of the Gospel* hath taken good effect, are *indeed Christians*, and none but such; in the success of that must needs lie the power of Christianity, and in nothing else. And therefore whosoever they are in whom the genuine effects of righteousness and true holiness are conspicuous, we ought to look upon them as living members of that body, whereof Christ is the head. Whoever are ready to profess their faith in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit in all Scripture phrases (without perverting their manifest and apparent sense) and lead a life answerable (for ought we can discern) to the clear intimations of our Saviour's will and all the rules plainly laid down in his holy Gospel, (though it should not be their fortune to concur with us in all our sentiments) it is our duty to judge them to be indued with all the essentials, and integral parts of Christianity, and accordingly to carry our selves towards them: or we shall offer them too great a temptation to suspect, that we our selves are ignorant wherein they consist, and for all our great profession are void of them.

There is one thing more which I cannot forbear to add concerning the weighty and most important point we are now discoursing, and which contains the sum of all that need to be said about it, *viz.* That it is impossible we should not have the *Design of Christianity* accomplished in us, and therefore that we should be destitute of the power thereof, if we make *our Saviour's most excellent life* (a short account of which we have been in this tractate presented with) *the pattern of our lives*; if we write after that fair copy he hath therein set us, if we tread in his blessed steps, and be

* Οὐ γὰρ τιμήσεις τὸν Θεὸν διδόντι αὐτῷ, ἀλλ' ἄξιος τῷ λαβεῖν τὰ παρ' ἐκείνου γενόμενος. Comment. in Aur. Carm. p. 22.

(*k*) John v. 18.

be such, according to our measure and capacity, as we have understood he was in this world. Those that sincerely and industriously endeavour to imitate the holy Jesus in his spirit and actions, can never be ignorant what it is to be truly Christians; nor can they fail to be so. And if the history of his life were more perused and minded, and that he designed to be therein our example (as both he and his apostles have often enough assured us he did) were more seriously considered, it could not possibly be that the design of his Gospel, and that wherein consists the power of godliness and soul of Christianity, should be by so many so miserably mistaken, as we see it is.

The Conclusion.

WHAT remaineth now, but that we sedulously, and with the greatest concern, betake our selves to find that, which hath been proved to be the *design of Christianity*, accomplish'd in our hearts and lives.

That we endeavour above all things, *to walk worthy of the vocation* wherewith we are called; and that *our conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ:* and by that means make it appear to our selves and others, that we are not in the number of those wretched souls, on whom the knowledge of the most incomparable religion is thrown away, and bestowed to very ill, or to no purpose.

That we place the *kingdom of God* not *in word*, but *in power*; and our Christianity not in letting our tongues loose, but in bridling both them and our exorbitant affections.

That we make less noise, be less *disputatious*, and more *obedient:* That we *talk* and *cavil* less, and *be* and *live* better; as well knowing that an objecting, quarrelsome and wrangling humour, serves to no better end, than eating out the heart and life of all true religion.

Let us exercise our selves unto real and substantial godliness, and in keeping our consciences void of offence both towards God and towards men; and in studying the Gospel to inable us not to *discourse*, or only to *believe*; but also and above all things to *do well.*

Let us esteem Christianity a principle of such vigour, sprightliness and activity, as to be assured of nothing more, than that it cannot possibly *be* where it doth not *act*; and that the lives of those that are indued with it cannot but bear witness to the force of it.

Let us do what lyeth in us to convince our *infidels*, that the religion of the blessed Jesus is no trick or device; and our *wanton and loose Christians*, that it is no *notional* business, or *speculative* science, by letting them see what it hath produced in our selves; by shewing them how sober and temperate, how chaste, how severely just, how meek and peaceable, how humble, how patient and submissive to the will of God, how loving and charitable, what contemners of this world, and confiders in God, we are enabled to be by the power of it.

Let us declare that we are not mere professors of faith in Christ Jesus, by doing acts worthy of such a faith: that we are not barely relyers on Christ's righteousness, by being imitators of it, *by being righteous as he was righteous:* that we do truly believe the Christian doctrine, by cheerfully complying with the Christian precepts. (*l*) Hereby let us know that we do *indeed* know him, that we keep his commandments.

By our care thus to do shall our minds (as hath been shewn) be inlightened in all necessary truth *. It was by their care to *do* the *will* of *God*, that the primitive Christians obtained the right *knowledge* of it. And there is no such method for the acquiring of all useful knowledge as this is.

By this means shall we also be kept constant in the true profession of the faith. The *obedient* are the only Christians that are out of danger even of a total apostasie; nor can there be any sure hold of any one that is not obedient. He whose great design is to keep the commandments of God, and his Son Jesus, is the only solid, stable and settled man. Our Saviour hath likened him unto a *wise man which built his house upon a rock*, which, notwithstanding that the rain descended, and floods came, and the winds blew, and all beat upon it, fell not, *because it was founded upon a rock* (*m*). And on the contrary he hath compared those that *hear*, but *do not* his sayings, to a *foolish man which built his house upon the sands* (*n*); which, when assaulted by a tempest, fell; *and great was the fall of it*. 'Tis no strange thing to see a very highly *professing*, if he be not as conscientiously *living* a Christian, tossed up and down like a wave of the sea, and carried away with every wind of doctrine: but so will not the *obedient* person be. He may ('tis confessed) alter his opinion in the *less weighty* and *more obscurely delivered* points, but those which belong to the main *body* and *substance* of Christianity, and are *plainly* revealed, as all such are, he will inseparably adhere to.

By this means will our knowledge be sanctified and made useful, but without the care of obedience it will be utterly unprofitable, nay, of very hurtful and mischievous consequence. Whatsoever Christian knowledge is not impregnated with answerable goodness, but is unaccompanied with Christian practice, is not only an *insipid* and *jejune*, but also a *flatulent* thing, that in stead of *nourishing* is apt to swell and *puff up* the souls of men; I mean, to make them proud and highly opinionated of their own worth, censorious and contemners of other people, and of a conceited and pragmatical, a contentious and unpeaceable behaviour. And there is no man but may observe too many of our great pretenders to Christianity unhappily exemplifying, and demonstrating by their practices, this sad truth.

By this means, shall we convince gainsayers more than by any arguments: but they are never like to be perswaded that our *judgements* are *orthodox*, while they perceive our *conversations* to be *heretical*. Wicked men are a great discredit to any party they side with, and do it mighty disservice.

(*l*) John ii. 3.

* Ποιοῦντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ θέλημα γνωσόμεθα. Clem. Alexandrin. Stromat. Lib. 1. pag. 288.

(*m*) Matth. vii. 24.

(*n*) Verse 26.

disservice. I wish we of the Church of *England* did not know this by very woeful experience. And on the other hand, a good life cannot but be of exceeding great force to draw dissenters to the embracing of our religion. We see that mere pretences to great sanctity do strangely make proselytes to several forms, that have nothing besides to set them off. And as for obstinate persons, who are peremptorily resolved that they will by no means be prevailed with to come over to us, they will, however, be greatly disabled from reproaching our religion, when they are convinced that it hath excellent effects on the professors of it: or at least, neither their reproaches, nor any attempts whatsoever against it, could then ever have success, or be able to do any thing to its considerable prejudice. Nor would that idle and senseless talk, whereby some hot people endeavour to prove us an *Anti Christian Church*, be by many, if by any, listened to, could they discern among us more *Christian lives*: could they be once satisfied that we esteem it our principal interest and concernment, to make our selves and others really and *substantially* good. *So is the will of God* (saith S. *Peter*,) *that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men* (*o*).

By this means shall we pass cheerfully through this sad world; and in the midst of our thoughts within us, will solid comforts delight our souls. Little do those think what happiness they deprive themselves of, even in *this* life, that place their religion in any thing more than an universal respect to their Saviour's precepts. There is no true Christian that needs to be told, that the more careful he is to *obey God*, the more sweetly he enjoys himself: nor, that a virtuous and holy life doth several ways bring in a constant revenue of peace and pleasure; even such as no earthly thing can afford any that deserves to be named with it. Every good man feels that Christ's yoke is not less *pleasant* than *easie*, nor his burthen more *light* than *delightful*: and that *all his ways* are, upon many accounts, *ways of pleasantness*, and *all his paths peace*. So that, were there no other reward to be hoped for, but what daily attends them, it would be most unquestionably our interest to walk in them, and to forsake all other for them: and there is no one of Christ's disciples that by *experience* understands what his blessed Master's injunctions are, that would be content to be eased, though he might, of them: or that would accept of a *Quietus* from performing the duties required by him, though he should have it offered him, even with the *broad seal* of heaven (which is impossible to be supposed) affixed to it.

But, lastly, by this means shall we obtain, when we depart hence, *the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls*, and arrive at a most happy and glorious immortality. By the pursuance of real and universal righteousness shall we certainly obtain the *crown of righteousness*, which our righteous redeemer hath purchased for us, and *God the Righteous Judge* (*p*) will give unto us. An *exceeding and eternal weight of glory* we shall assuredly reap, if we faint not, and be not weary of well-doing.

Glory, honour and peace (*q*) are the undoubted portion of every soul that worketh good. And *blessed are they that do his commandments, for they have right to the tree of life, and shall enter through the gates into the city* (*r*).

(*o*) 1 Pet. ii. 15.
(*p*) 2 Tim 4.
(*q*) Rom. ii. 10.
(*r*) Rev. xxii. 14.

But if on the contrary, we foolishly satisfie our selves with an *ineffectual* faith in Christ, a *notional* knowledge and *empty* profession of his religion, or a meerly *external* and *partial* righteousness; these will be so far from intitling us to the *exceeding great and precious promises* of the Gospel, that they (at least the three former) will much heighten our misery in the world to come, and excessively aggravate our condemnation.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments (from a principle of love to him and them) *for this is the whole of* (the Christian) *Man.*

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

LIPENIUS in his Bibliotheca Realis Theologica; *Cave* in his Hiſtoria Literaria; *Du Pin* in his Nouvelle Bibliotheque; *Bray* in his Bibliotheca Parochialis; *Calmet* in his Bibliotheca Sacra; *Fabricius*, *De Bure*, *Walchius*, and a great many others, have publiſhed accounts of the principal writers on Theological Subjects. I have no intention to emulate the labours of theſe learned Men; but as ſome of the Clergy have ability to purchaſe, and many of them inclination to uſe a Theological Library, I thought it might be of advantage to the younger part of them, if I put down a few of the moſt approved Books in Divinity, which have come to my knowledge. My chief difficulty in forming this Catalogue, has been to make it a ſhort one; for the number of books explanatory of Scripture, which any perſon, who has a taſte for this kind of learning, would wiſh to be poſſeſſed of, not ſo much for the ſake of peruſing, as of conſulting them, is very great. Our Engliſh writers alone on Scripture Subjects, are exceeding numerous; the reader who wiſhes to ſee what the number was, above a century ago, may conſult a book publiſhed at London, 1668, 2d Ed. intitled—The Catalogue of our Engliſh Writers on the old and new Teſtament, either in whole or in part, whether Commentators, Elucidators, Annotators, Expoſitors at large or in ſingle Sermons.—It might have been expected that I ſhould have given a more ſcientific form to this Catalogue, and if I had been making a complete *Bibliotheca Sacra*, I would have done it; but in the few books which are here enumerated, I thought it as uſeful to arrange them according to their ſize, as to their ſubject.

I am ſenſible that I have omitted in this Catalogue the mention of many books, which other men would have introduced into it; but ſo I ſhould have done, though I had made it twice as long as it is; and yet it is ſo copious, that, I believe, there are few ſubjects in divinity, on which the Student may not find ſufficient Information, by conſulting ſome or other of the authors here enumerated. It is probable too, that ſome may find fault with me for having introduced books which they would have omitted; I mean thoſe books, eſpecially, which maintain Doctrines oppoſite to the Articles of the Church of England. But I intreat them to conſider, whether we were not Members of the *Church of Chriſt*, before we were Members of the *Church of England*; and again and again to reflect, whether we can promote the intereſts of the Church of Chriſt, by ſtifling the Arguments of thoſe who think, that as the Church of *Jeruſalem*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch* and *Rome* have erred, ſo alſo the Church of *England* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies,

but alſo in matters of faith. If in this point they think amiſs, their arguments will be overthrown and produce no effect; but if they think rightly, God grant that they may produce their proper effect—the prevalence of Goſpel Truth: and whether they think rightly or amiſs, can never be ſo clearly known as by encouraging them, on the moſt liberal principles, to publiſh to the world the reſult of their critical inquiries into the meaning of Scripture Language.

A

CATALOGUE OF BOOKS IN DIVINITY.

FOLIOS.

VETUS Teſtamentum Hebraicum cum variis Lectionibus. Edidit Benj. Kennicot S. T. P. Oxonii, 1776-80, 2 vol.—The Author of this Work certainly poſſeſſed the φιλοπονιαν of the diſtinguiſhed writers of the laſt century: the great utility of this Collation of Hebrew MSS. will beſt be known, when the preſent Engliſh Tranſlation of the old Teſtament ſhall be *amended* by Authority; an event which many good men anxiouſly expect.

Biblia Hebraica cum Notis criticis et Verſione Latina ad Notas criticas facta; accedunt Libri Græci qui Deutero-Canonici vocantur in tres Claſſes diſtributi. Auctore Car. Fran. Houbigant, Lutetiæ Pariſiorum, 1753, 4 vol.—The opinion of the *Integrity* of the common printed Hebrew Text is ſhewn, in this Edition of the Bible, to be erroneous: Houbigant having, in this point, anticipated, in ſome meaſure, the labours of Kennicot. The Latin Verſion, from its conformity to the Idiom of the Hebrew Language, is eſteemed inelegant; but it may not on that account be leſs uſeful.

The Hebrew Concordance adapted to the Engliſh Bible, diſpoſed after the Manner of Buxtorf, by John Taylor of Norwich, Lond. 1754, 2 vol.—The firſt Concordances of the Holy Scriptures were compoſed in the 13th Century, and were of the Latin Vulgate. Concordances gave riſe to Lexicons and Dictionaries; and the learned author of this Concordance recommends it, as not merely ſerving to find places of Scripture, but as the beſt Hebrew Lexicon which is extant. Other Hebrew Concordances are, That by Marius de Calaſio, Rome, 1621, 4 vol. A new edition of which was publiſhed by W. Romaine, Lond. 1747.—That by W. Robertſon, intitled, *Theſaurus Linguæ Sanctæ ſive Concordantiale Lexicon Hebræo-Latinum-Biblicum*, Lond. 1680.—And that by Buxtorf, which Taylor made the ground-work of his own, and of which biſhop Barlow ſays, though it be leſs, yet whether it be not better than Calaſio's, *docti judicent.*

Vetus Teſtamentum Græcum ex verſione LXX. Interpretum, ex Antiquiſſimo MS. *Alexandrino*, et Ope aliorum Exemplarium, ac priſcorum Scriptorum, præſertim vero Hexaplaris Editionis Origenianæ emendatum atque

atque ſuppletum; ſumma cura edidit Joan. Erneſtus Grabe S. T. P. Oxonii, 1707, &c. 2 vol. An improved Edition of this Work was publiſhed by *Breitinger* Tiguri Helvetiorum, 1730, 4 vol. 4to. A collation of the MSS. of the Septuagint, as recommended by Dr. *Owen*, would certainly be very acceptable to the learned world; and I have no doubt in thinking, that the Syndics of the Univerſity Preſs in Cambridge, would lend a very liberal Aſſiſtance to any one, who would undertake to publiſh a properly collated Edition of this ancient Verſion.

Daniel ſecundum Septuaginta ex Tetraplis Origenis, nunc primum editus e ſingulari Chiſiano Codice annorum ſupra 800, Romæ, 1772. The portion of the *Chiſianus Codex*, which is here publiſhed, is diſtinguiſhed in the MS. itſelf by this note, *Daniel Secundum* LXX. *deſcriptus eſt ab Exemplari ejuſmodi Notationem habente* "depromptus eſt Tetraplis cum quibus eſt recognitus." In all the Editions of the Septuagint, the Book of Daniel is thought to be printed from the Tranſlation of *Theodotion*, or at leaſt not from the *pure* Verſion of the LXX. (ſee Dr. Owen's learned Inquiry into the preſent State of the Septuagint Verſion), but the *Tetrapla* of Origen contained the real pure Verſion of the LXX.; and it is this Verſion of the Book of Daniel which the learned Author has publiſhed, after it had been neglected for above 1500 years.

Daniel ſecundum Ed. LXX. Interpretum ex Tetraplis deſumptum: ex codice Syro—Eſtranghelo Bibliothecæ Ambroſianæ Syriace edidit, Latine vertit, præfatione notiſque criticis illuſtravit Cajetanus. Bagatus Col. Ambro. Doctor. Mediolani 1788.—The learned editor obſerves, that there are many errors in the Septuagint verſion of Daniel, which was publiſhed a few years ago ex Codice Chiſiano, and in this Syriac verſion of the Septuagint tranſlation he thinks they are amended. If ever an Engliſh tranſlation of the Septuagint verſion of Daniel, as contained *in Codice Chiſiano*, ſhould be attempted, there is no queſtion that this work would be of great uſe to the tranſlator.

Abrahami Trommii Concordantiæ Græcæ Verſionis vulgo dictæ Septuaginta Interpretum. Amſtel. 1718, 2 vol. Taylor, in ſpeaking of his Hebrew Concordance commends this Greek one as a very exact and judicious Work, and points out the manner of uſing it to great advantage in conjunction with his own.

Biblia Sacra Polyglotta, complectentia Textus Originales Hebraicum cum Pentateucho Samaritano, Chaldaicum, Græcum; verſionumque antiquarum Samaritanæ, Græcæ LXXII. Interpretum, Chaldaicæ, Syriacæ, Arabicæ, Æthiopicæ, Perſicæ, Vulg. Lat. quicquid comparari poterat. Edidit Brianus Waltonus S. T. P. Lond. 1657, 6 vol. Other Polyglots of repute are, That publiſhed under the auſpices of Cardinal Ximenes at Alcala or Complutum in 1514, &c. 6 vol. That by Arias Montanus at Antwerp, 1569, &c. 8 vol. That which goes under the name of Vetablus, at Heidelberg, 1568, 2 vol. and that by Mich. le Jay at Paris, 1645, 10 vol. of which *De Bure*, in his *Bibliographie Inſtructive*, ſays, that Walton's was but a re-impreſſion. The truth is, that every ſubſequent Polyglot was an improvement upon the preceding; and Walton's, as being the laſt, comprehends, together with various Additions, every thing of value that is contained in any of the reſt. The *Prolegomena* prefixed to his Polyglot will give much information to the Reader, concerning ſacred Chronology, from the Creation of the world to the Deſtruction

ſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans; concerning the Monies, Weights, and Meaſures of the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans; concerning the Geography of the Holy Land; the deſcription of the City and Temple of Jeruſalem; the Origin of Languages; the Verſions and Editions of the Bible, &c.

Lexicon Heptaglotton Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syriacum, Samaritanum, Æthiopicum, Arabicum, et Perſicum, digeſtum et evulgatum, ab Edvardo Caſtello, Lond. 1686, 2 vol.—Caſtel aſſiſted Walton in the publication of his Polyglot; he ſoon afterwards compoſed this Lexicon as a neceſſary Supplement to that Work. He ſays of himſelf, *Dies ille tanquam feſtus et otioſus viſus eſt, in quo tam Bibliis Polyglottis quam Lexicis hiſce provehendis ſexdecim aut octodecim horas dietim non inſudavi:* and that for near twenty years together!

Humfredi Hodii de Bibliorum Textibus Originalibus, Verſionibus Græcis, et Latina Vulgata, Libri IV. viz I. Contra Hiſtoriam LXX. Interpretum Ariſteæ nomine inſcriptam Diſſertatio, &c. II. De Verſione (quam vocant) LXX. Interpretum auctoribus veris, eamque conficiendi Tempore, Modo, et Ratione. III. Hiſtoria Scholaſtica Textuum Originalium, Verſioniſque Græcæ LXX. dictæ, et Latinæ Vulgatæ, &c. IV. De cæteris Græcis Verſionibus, *Origenis* Hexaplis, &c. præmittitur Ariſteæ Hiſtoria Græcè et Latinè. Oxon. 1705.

Novum Teſtamentum Græcum, cum Lectionibus variantibus MSS. Exemplarium, Verſionum, Editionum, SS. Patrum et Scriptorum Eccleſiaſticorum; et in eaſdem notis. Accedunt Loca Scripturæ Parallela, aliaque exegetica. Præmittitur Diſſertatio de Libris N. T. et Canonis Conſtitutione, et S. Textus N. Fœderis ad noſtra uſque Tempora Hiſtoria. Studio et Labore Joan. Millii S. T. P. Collectionem Millianam recenſuit, meliori ordine diſpoſuit, noviſque acceſſionibus locupletavit Ludolphus Kuſterus. Roterodami, 1710. The Edition of this Teſtament, publiſhed at Oxford in 1707, is preferable to this for the largeneſs of the Type; another Edition, with Kuſter's Additions, was publiſhed at Leipſic, 1723.

Novum Teſtamentum Græcum Editionis receptæ, cum Lectionibus variantibus Codicum MSS. Editionum aliarum, Verſionum, et Patrum, nec-non Commentario pleniore ex Scriptoribus veteribus Hebræis, Græcis et Latinis Hiſtoriam et vim Verborum illuſtrante. Opera et Studio Joan. Jacob. Wetſteinii, Amſtel. 1751-2, 2 vol. The Author, in the *Prolegomena* to this Work, treats of the Manuſcripts, Verſions, and moſt of the noted Editions of the Greek Teſtament which were publiſhed before his own, which he reckons to have been 19 or 20, beginning with that publiſhed at Complutum in 1514. "Sunt autem Editiones principes N. T. (neglectis iis editionibus, quæ priorem aliquam κατὰ πόδα exprimunt) in univerſum viginti aut novendecim." The Prolegomena were publiſhed ſeparately in 1730, and again by Semler, Halæ Magdebriæ, 1764; with ſome Additions and an Appendix concerning the ancient Latin Verſions.

Novi Teſtamenti Jeſu Chriſti Græci, hoc eſt Originalis Linguæ Tameion, aliis Concordantiæ, Opera Eraſ. Schmidii, Lipſiæ, 1717. This Book was firſt publiſhed at Wittemberg in 1638, and it is looked upon as a great Improvement of the Concordance of Henry Stephens, publiſhed in 1595. This Concordance may be of great ſervice in aſſiſting the reader to find out the true meaning of any word, which has been

uſed more than once by the Writers of the new Teſtament; for, by a compariſon of the ſenſes in which it has been uſed in different places, he will be able to inveſtigate the ſenſe it bears in the place in queſtion.

Harmonia Evangelica, cui ſubjecta eſt Hiſtoria Chriſti ex quatuor Evangeliis concinnata. Acceſſerunt tres Diſſertationes de annis Chriſti, de que Concordia et Auctoritate Evangeliorum, auctore Joan. Clerico. Amſtel. 1699. and in Engliſh in 4to. Lond. 1701.

An Harmony of the Goſpels, in which the Original Text is diſpoſed after Le Clerc's general Manner, with ſuch various Readings at the Foot of the Page, as have received Wetſtein's Sanction in his folio Edition of the Greek Teſtament. Obſervations are ſubjoined tending to ſettle the Time and Place of every Tranſaction, to eſtabliſh the Series of Facts, and to reconcile ſeeming Inconſiſtencies. By W. Newcome, D. D. Biſhop of Oſſory. Dublin, 1778. Many other Harmonies of the Goſpels have been publiſhed, but none preferable to this.

Critici Sacri, ſive doctiſſimorum Virorum in SS. Biblia Annotationes et Tractatus. Lond. 1660, et Amſtel. 1698. *Cornelius Bee*, the Printer of this great Work, and who had a Patent for the Sale of it, thus intimates its Value to the Reader. "Hic enim circiter libri nonaginta, iique *integri*, in novem coierunt; et libræ plus minus *quinquagenæ* (nuper vix aut ne vix minoris hæc omnia coemiſſes) jam ad *quindenas* rediguntur." The preſent Price of this Work is not above *two* or *three* pounds. Amongſt the 90 Authors whoſe Annotations on the whole or on different parts of the Bible are here printed intire, we meet with the names of Munſter, Fagius, Vetablus, Caſtalio, Clarius, Druſius, Grotius, Eraſmus, Scaliger, Caſaubon, Capellus, Scultetus, Pricæus, &c.

Synopſis Criticorum aliorumque S. Scripturæ Interpretum. Opera Mat. Poli. Lond. 1669-74, 5 vol.—This Work is a kind of an Abridgment of the preceding, inriched however with many additions. It certainly may be of great uſe to thoſe who have not the command of many Books; and it is now ſold for five-and-twenty or thirty ſhillings. It was reprinted at Utrecht in 1684; and ſince that time two other Editions of it have been publiſhed in Germany: which ſhews, that, into whatever degree of neglect this Synopſis may have fallen amongſt ourſelves, it is much eſteemed abroad.

Hugonis Grotii Opera omnia Theologica in tres Tomos (uſually bound in four Volumes) diviſa, ante quidem per partes nunc autem conjunctim et accuratius Edita. Amſtel. 1679, 4 vol. Another Edition at Baſil, 1732.—Grotius was of the ſame age with Epiſcopius, whoſe Theological Inſtitutes he ſo greatly admired, that he is ſaid to have always carried them about with him. Calmet affirms, that Grotius' Opinions are very ambiguous as to the Article of Chriſt's Divinity, and the Doctrine of Original Sin; that his Preface and Explanation of the Canticles are ſcandalous; that he weakens or reduces almoſt to nothing the Prophecies relating to Jeſus Chriſt. Notwithſtanding this cenſure, Grotius is deſervedly eſteemed one of the beſt general Commentators on Scripture. Vitringa ſays of him, *Hugo Grotius* εν τοις μεν δογματων παραξεσι, *ſed eruditionis et limati cætera judicii reſpectu haud dubie*

dubie poſt Eraſmum ἐν τοῖς *Belgarum* ἀριστοις cenſendus. And with reſpect to his *dogmata*, it ought not, ſurely, to be concluded, that an Interpreter denies a doctrine, becauſe he does not admit the uſual expoſition of texts weakly adduced in its ſupport. Grotius' notions concerning the Pope's not being Antichriſt, and concerning Paul's expectation of living till the General Judgment, are, in the Opinion of many ſenſible Proteſtants, far more erroneous than any thing he has ſaid about the Canticles.

Moſis Prophetæ Libri quinque ex Tranſlatione Joannis Clerici, cum ejuſdem Paraphraſi perpetua, Commentario Philologico, Diſſertationibus Criticis Tabuliſque Chronologicis et Geographicis. Ed. 2da. auctior et emendatior. Amſtel. 1710.

Veteris Teſtamenti Libri Hiſtorici ex Tranſlatione Joan. Clerici, cum ejuſdem Commentario Philologico, Diſſertationibus Criticis et Tabulis Chronologicis. Amſtel. 1708.

Veteris Teſtamenti Libri Hagiographi ex Tranſlatione Joan. Clerici, cum ejuſdem Commentario Philologico in omnes memoratos Libros et Paraphraſi in Jobum ac Pſalmos. Amſtel. 1731.

Veteris Teſtamenti Prophetæ ab Eſaia ad Malachiam uſque, ex Tranſlatione J. Clerici, cum ejuſdem Commentario Phlilologico et Paraphraſi in Eſaiam, Jeremiam, ejus Lamentationes et Abdiam. Amſtel. 1731. Thus we have the Tranſlation of all the Books of the old Teſtament, and a Paraphraſe and Notes on the greateſt part of them, by one of the moſt learned and judicious Critics of this Century. The Diſſertations contained in this work are, 1. De Lingua Hebraica. 2. De optimo genere Interpretum S. Scripturæ. 3. De Scriptore Pentateuchi Moſe, ejuſque in ſcribendo conſilio. 4. De Sodomæ finitimarumque Urbium ſubverſione. 5. De Statua Salina. 6. De Maris Idumæi trajectione. 7. A Tranſlation into Latin of the three firſt Chapters of Selden's Hiſtory of Tythes. 8. De Scriptoribus Librorum Hiſtoricorum veteris Teſtamenti. 9. De LXXII. Virorum in Republica Populi Hebræi Synedrio. 10. De Lepra Moſaica. 11. A Tranſlation into Latin of Smith's Diſcourſe on Prophecy. 12. De Poeſi Hebræorum.

Novum Teſtamentum Domini noſtri Jeſu Chriſti, ex Verſione Vulgata: cum Paraphraſi et Adnotationibus Henrici Hammondi ex Anglica Lingua in Latinam tranſtulit, ſuiſque Animadverſionibus illuſtravit, caſtigavit, auxit Joan. Clericus. Ed. 2da. Francofort. 1714, 2 vol. All theſe Works of Le Clerc may be met with uniformly bound, under the Title of, Clericus in vetus et novum Teſtamentum, 6 vol.

A Commentary on all the Books of the old Teſtament, excepting the Prophets, by Biſhop Patrick, in 3 vol. 1679-94, 4th. Ed. Lond. 1732.

A Commentary upon the larger and leſſer Prophets, being a Continuation of Biſhop Patrick, by W. Lowth, D. D. 3d. Ed. Lond. 1730.

A critical Commentary upon the Book of the Wiſdom of Solomon, upon Eccleſiaſticus, Tobit, Judith, Baruch, the Hiſtory of Suſannah, and Bel and the Dragon, to which are added, two Diſſertations on the Books of the Maccabees and Eſdras, being a Continuation of Bp. Patrick and Mr. Lowth, by R. Arnald, B. D. Lond. 1744-52. Theſe five

five Volumes contain the beſt Commentary on the old Teſtament and the Apocrypha, which we have in the Engliſh Language.

The Theological Works of the learned Dr. Pocock, ſometime Profeſſor of the Hebrew and Arabic Tongues in the Univerſity of Oxford, and Canon of Chriſt Church, containing his Porta Moſis and Engliſh Commentary on Hoſea, Joel, Micah, and Malachi. To which is prefixed, an Account of his Life and writings, never before printed, with the addition of a new general Index to the Commentary, by Leo. Twells. Lond. 1740, 2 vol.

The Works of the reverend and learned John Lightfoot, D. D. late Maſter of Catharine Hall in Cambridge, and Prebend of Ely. Reviſed and corrected by George Bright, D. D. Lond. 1684, 2 vol. Another Edition of this Work with a Latin Tranſlation of what Dr. Lightfoot had written in Engliſh, and ſome Additions, was publiſhed at Rotterdam in 1686.

A Collection of Polemical Diſcourſes, by Jeremy Taylor, D. D. late Lord Biſhop of Down and Connor. 3d Ed. Lond. 1674. The Tract intitled, The Liberty of Propheſying; in which the Author contends, that none ought to be excluded from Chriſtian Communion who believe the Apoſtles' Creed, is eſteemed the moſt valuable in the Collection. It was publiſhed in 4to. 1647.

Commentarius in Librum Prophetiarum Jeſaiæ, quo ſenſus Orationis ejus ſedulo inveſtigatur; in veras viſorum interpretandorum Hypotheſes inquiritur, et ex iiſdem facta interpretatio antiquæ Hiſtoriæ monumentis confirmatur atque illuſtratur, cum Prolegomenis, cura et ſtudio Campegii Vitringa. Ed. nova Leovardiæ 1724, 2 vol.

A Paraphraſe and Commentary on the new Teſtament, by Dan. Whitby. 5th. Ed. Lond 1727, 2 vol.—Whitby ſays in his preface, that he found ſo many things ſaid by Le Clerc, in his Animadverſions on Hammond, in favour of the Arians, that he protracted the publication of his Work till he had prepared an Antidote for them. It is but Juſtice to him to obſerve, that he lived to change his Sentiments upon this ſubject, as may be ſeen in a Tract, called Whitby's Laſt Thoughts. Henry's Expoſition of the old and new Teſtament, in 6 vol. fol. 1ſt Ed. 1706. laſt in 1772; and Burkit's Expoſition of the new Teſtament, laſt Ed. in 1779, are works of great merit; but if I was to mention any other Commentator on the whole Bible, it ſhould be *Calmet*, whoſe work, intitled, La Sainte Bible en Latin et en François, avec un Commentaire littéral et critique; which was publiſhed at Paris in 9 vol. fol. 1724, and before that in 26 vol. 4to. This is a very excellent Work, containing, beſides the Commentary, many learned Diſſertations on various Subjects. A Collection of the Diſſertations with many Corrections and Additions was publiſhed in 1720, in 3 vol. 4to.

Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant, inſtructa omnibus Operibus Fauſti Socini Senenſis, Nobiliſſimi Itali; Joan. Crellii, Franci; Jonæ Slichtingii a Bucowietz, Equitis Poloni, exegeticis; et Joan. Ludovici Wolzogenii Baronis Auſtriaci, quæ omnia ſimul juncta totius novi Teſtamenti explicationem complectuntur. Irenopoli poſt annum Domini 1656, 8 vol. and with the works of Przicovius and

and Brennius, 9 vol. Piget quidem horum Commentarios Chriſtianorum inter adnumerare, multo magis in Bibliothecam Chriſtianam reponere; quos utinam in æternis ſepultos tenebris manere concederetur, ſays Dr. Bray. On the other hand, there is, ſays Dr. Harwood in his Eſſay on the Socinian Scheme, "hardly a good Criticiſm in all our modern Expoſitors, Mr. Locke, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Benſon, Dr. Taylor, Meſſrs. Pearce and Hallet, Dr. Sykes, but what is to be found in the Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum." Dr. Harwood is not ſingular in this opinion; and if it be a true one, theſe books may be conſulted with advantage by thoſe who do not adopt the particular Tenets of Socinus and the Unitarians, as well as by thoſe who do. It does not become us as Proteſtants to proſcribe the uſe of any book, merely becauſe it queſtions the validity of doctrines which we think true; that is the narrow and illiberal policy of thoſe, who are buſied in buttreſſing up rotten fabrics of hypocriſy and ſuperſtition, by *Imprimaturs* and expurgatory Indexes. The reader will meet with a liſt of various authors who oppoſed the doctrines of Socinus, in Biſhop Barlow's Directions for the Choice of Books in the Study of Divinity.

Theſaurus Theologico-Philologicus, ſive Sylloge Diſſertationum elegantiorum ad ſelectiora et illuſtriora veteris et novi Teſtamenti loca a Theologis Proteſtantibus in Germania ſeparatim diverſis temporibus conſcriptarum. Amſtel. 1701, 2 vol.

Theſaurus Novus Theologico-Philologicus, ſive Sylloge Diſſertationum exegeticarum, ad ſelectiora atque inſigniora veteris et novi Teſtamenti loca a Theologis Proteſtantibus maximam partem in Germania diverſis temporibus ſeparatim editarum. Lugduni Batavorum. 1732, 2 vol. Theſe four volumes may be eaſily met with; I have a ſuſpicion that two other volumes have been publiſhed ſince 1732, but I have never ſeen them. In moſt of theſe diſſertations which I have read, there is more oſtentation of learning than inſtructive criticiſm. They are uſeful however to be conſulted.

Dictionnaire Hiſtorique, Critique, Chronologique, Geographique et Literal de la Bible, par Auguſtin Calmet. a Paris, 1730, 4 vol. A tranſlation of this truly valuable work, with occaſional remarks, was publiſhed in 3 vol. in Lond. 1732. At the end of this work there is a *Bibliotheca Sacra*, or an account of the moſt celebrated writers on the Scriptures. I wiſh that ſome perſon, who has leiſure and ability for the undertaking, would publiſh this Bibliotheca, with the Addition, under the proper heads, of ſuch books of Merit on Theological Subjects, as have appeared ſince the year 1730. Our *Reviews*, the *Journal des Sçavans*, the *Acta Eruditorum*, and other periodical works, would greatly aſſiſt him, not only in finding out the books which have been publiſhed, but in forming, in moſt caſes, a tolerable judgment of their merit.

A new Hiſtory of the Holy Bible, from the Beginning of the World to the Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, with Anſwers to moſt of the controverted Queſtions, Diſſertations upon the moſt remarkable Paſſages, and a Connection of profane Hiſtory all along. To which are added, Notes explaining difficult Texts, rectifying Miſ-tranſlations, and reconciling ſeeming Contradictions. The whole illuſtrated with one hundred

hundred and four uſeful and ornamental Maps and Sculptures, engraved by the beſt Hands, from original Paintings, by the Rev. Tho. Stackhouſe, A. M. Lond. 1752. The firſt Edition of this Book was publiſhed in 1742. It is ſtill eſteemed a very uſeful work, and ſold at a good price. The Author publiſhed a Body of Divinity and other Works.

An Hiſtorical Dictionary of all Religions, from the Creation of the World to the preſent Time, by J. Broughton, A. M. Lond. 1756, 2 vol. The Germans have thought ſo well of this Work as to tranſlate it into their own Language.

The Religious Ceremonies and Cuſtoms of the ſeveral Nations of the known World; repreſented in an hundred Copper-plates, deſigned by the famous Picart, together with hiſtorical Explanations and ſeveral curious Diſſertations, written originally in French, and now publiſhed in Engliſh, with very conſiderable Amendments and Additions, in 6 vol. Lond. 1731. If ever another Edition of this curious Work ſhould be attempted, the Religion of the Inhabitants of the newly diſcovered Parts of the Globe, will make an important Article in it. Some future *Bochart* or *Bryant* will then add another Argument in Favour of revealed Religion, by tracing the Origin of the Inhabitants of *New Zealand* and *Otaheite* to the common Stock *Noah*.

Theſaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum, complectens ſelectiſſima Clariſſimorum virorum Opuſcula, in quibus veterum Hebræorum Mores, Leges, Inſtituta, Ritus ſacri et civiles, illuſtrantur: Opus ad illuſtrationem utriuſque Teſtamenti, et ad Philologiam ſacram et profanam utiliſſimum maximeque neceſſarium, auctore Blaſio Ugolino. Venetiis, 1744-69, 34 vol. Many other Books treating of Jewiſh Antiquities have been publiſhed; but thoſe who have a taſte for ſuch ſort of reading will find this collection far more uſeful to them than any other of the kind.

Samuelis Bocharti Opera omnia; hoc eſt Phaleg, Chanaan, ſeu Geographia Sacra; et Hierozoicon, ſive de Animalibus Sacræ Scripturæ, et Diſſertationes variæ. Edit. nova, auctoris cura Joan. Leuſden et Petri Villemandz. Lugd. Bata. 1712, 3 vol. Phyſica Sacra, or the Natural Hiſtory of the Bible, adorned with 750 Plates, was publiſhed at Auſburg in Germany in 1731, 4 vol. fol. by T. T. Scheuchzer, and it was tranſlated into French in 1732, 8 vol. fol. This is a magnificent work, in which the author has made much uſe of Bochart's Hierozoicon.

Diſcours Hiſtoriques, Critiques, Theologiques, et Moraux, ſur les Evenemens les plus memorables du vieux et du nouveaux Teſtament, par Mr. Saurin, &c. avec des Figures ſur les Deſſeins de Hoet, Houbraken, Picart. A la Haye, 1735-9, 6 vol. Mr. Vander Marck formed a deſign of repreſenting on copper-plates, the moſt memorable events of ſacred Hiſtory, and he engaged Mr. Saurin to write an explanation of the plates; this gave riſe to the diſcourſes here publiſhed.

De legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus et earum rationibus Libri quatuor, auctore Joan. Spencero S. T. D. Edidit L. Chappelow, Cant. 1727, 2 vol. In this work the learned author contends, that God introduced into

into the Jewiſh Ceremonial a great many Egyptian Rites, and accommodated them to the Prejudices of the Iſraelites, who had lived many years in Egypt. This Notion has been oppoſed and defended by various authors; the reader will find it ſhortly and ably refuted in a Treatiſe by Dr. Woodward, intitled, a Diſcourſe on the Worſhip of the ancient Egyptians, communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by Dr. Lort in 1775.

Flavii Joſephi Opera omnia, Gr. et Lat. cum Notis Hudſoni, Præfatione et Commentariis Havercampii. Amſtel. 1716, 2 vol. This work has been tranſlated into Engliſh by different Authors, particularly by Whiſton in 1737.

Hiſtoriæ Eccleſiaſticæ Scriptores Græci, nempe Euſebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoretus, &c. Gr. et Lat. cum Notis variorum. Cantab. 1720, 3 vol.

SS. Patrum qui temporibus Apoſtolicis floruerunt Barnabæ, Clementis, Hermæ, Ignatii, Polycarpi opera edita et inedita vera et ſuppoſititia, una cum Clementis, Ignatii, Polycarpi Actis atque Martyriis Opera Cotelerii; acceſſerunt in hac nova editione notæ integræ aliorum virorum doctorum qui in ſingulos Patres memoratos ſcripſerunt, et quorum nomina in præfatione habentur; item Gulielmi Beveregii Codex Canonum Primitivæ Eccleſiæ vindicatus; Jacobi Uſſerii Diſſertationes Ignatianæ, et Joan. Pearſonii Vindiciæ Epiſtolarum S. Ignatii, recenſuit et notulas aliquot adſperſit Joan. Clericus. Antwerpiæ, 1698, 2 vol. Another Ed. at Amſter. 1724. There is a celebrated work, intitled, Bibliotheca maxima veterum Patrum; 27 volumes of which were publiſhed at Lyons, 1677; an Index to the work at Genoa in 1707; and an Apparatus to it at Paris, 1715, 2 vol. making in the whole 30 volumes in folio. The Church of Rome maintains many doctrines for which there is no foundation, except in the writings of the Fathers; the Reformed Churches acknowledge the Bible to be the *ſole* rule of *their* faith; and hence, amongſt them, the Fathers are not ſo highly eſteemed as by the Church of Rome; eſpecially ſince the publication of *Daillé*'s Book *De uſu Patrum*, and of *Whitby*'s and *Middleton*'s Sentiments on that Subject. And, indeed, the Members of the Church of Rome itſelf, when not engaged in diſpute with *Heretics* ſpeak ſlightingly enough of the Fathers; for one of them, as quoted by Biſhop Barlow, tells us, "that if every thing was left out of the Fathers which we now believe not, *bona pars Scriptorum et Patrum periret.*" As interpreters of Scripture they are far inferior to the Moderns, but they may be uſeful examples to us in Piety and Zeal. Very good Editions of the works of Clement of Alexandria, of Irenæus, Cyprian, Juſtin, Jerome, Chryſoſtom, &c. &c. may be frequently purchaſed at a low price. He who can afford the expence will purchaſe the beſt editions of all books; but thoſe who cannot do that, ſhould not neglect the opportunity of furniſhing themſelves with inferior editions: very *uſeful* libraries, in all ſciences, may by this kind of attention be eaſily procured.

Theſaurus Eccleſiaſticus ex Patribus Græcis, ordine Alphabetico exhibens quæcunque Phraſes, Ritus, Dogmata, Hæreſes, et hujuſmodi alia ſpectant

ſpectant, opera J. Caſp. Suiceri. Amſtel. 1612, 2 vol. Another Ed. at Amſterdam in 1728. The beſt in 1746 at Utrecht.

The Works of the learned Joſ. Bingham, A. M. containing the Origines Eccleſiaſticæ, or Antiquities of the Chriſtian Church. A Scholaſtical Hiſtory of Lay Baptiſm. The French Churches' Apology for the Church of England. A Diſcourſe concerning the Mercy of God to penitent Sinners. Lond. 1726, 2 vol.

A new Hiſtory of Eccleſiaſtical Writers: containing a Catalogue and an Abridgment of their Works, and a Judgment of their Style and Doctrine; alſo a compendious Hiſtory of the Councils and all Affairs tranſacted in the Church, from the Birth of Chriſt to the Year 1550, written in French by L. E. du Pin. Lond. 1696-1703, 6 vol. Du Pin was a laborious, and, for a Catholic, a liberal Writer; this work is full of erudition, and may be bought for a trifle.

Scriptorum Eccleſiaſticorum Hiſtoria Literaria a Chriſto Nato, uſque ad Sæculum XIV. facili methodo digeſta, qua de Vita eorum et Rebus geſtis, de Secta, Dogmatibus, Elogio, Stylo; de Scriptis Genuinis, Dubiis, Suppoſititiis, Ineditis, Deperditis, Fragmentis, de variis Operum Editionibus agitur. Accedunt Scriptores Gentiles Chriſtianæ Religionis oppugnatores, et cujuſvis Sæculi Breviarium. Inſeruntur ſuis locis veterum aliquot Opuſcula et Fragmenta tum Græca tum Latina hactenus inedita. Præmiſſa denique Prolegomena, quibus plurima ad Antiquitatis Eccleſiaſticæ ſtudium ſpectantia traduntur opus Indicibus neceſſariis inſtructum. Auctore Gulielmo Cave S. T. P. accedit ab alia manu Appendix ab ineunte Sæculo XIV. ad annum 1517. Lond. 1688, et pars altera 1698. This work is ſo well deſcribed in the title, that the reader will fully apprehend its uſe, and of great uſe I conceive it to be; for it has been wiſely ſaid, *Scire ubi aliquid poſſes invenire magna pars eruditionis eſt.* It opens with an account of the Letter to *Agbarus*, which Cave *ſuppoſes* our *Saviour* to have written; and it ends with an account of the Writings of *Martin Luther*. A new edition was publiſhed at Geneva, 1720, and another at Oxford, 1740. A kind of Supplement to this and other works of the ſame kind, was publiſhed at Leipſic in 1722, under the following title: Caſimiri Oudini Commentarius de Scriptoribus Eccleſiæ antiquis illorumque Scriptis, tam impreſſis quam Manuſcriptis adhuc extantibus in celebrioribus Europæ Bibliothecis, a Bellarmino Poſſevino, Philippo Labbeo, Gulielmo Caveo, Ludovico Ellia de Pin, et aliis omiſſis ad annum 1460, vel ad artem Typographicam inventam; cum multis Diſſertationibus, in quibus inſignium Eccleſiæ auctorum Opuſcula, atque alia Argumenta notabiliora, accurate et prolixe examinantur, tribus Voluminibus cum Indicibus neceſſariis.

M. Simonis Epiſcopii SS. Theologiæ in Academia Leydenſi quondam Profeſſoris opera Theologica. Ed. 2da, Lond. 1678 Another vol. fol. of the Works of Epiſcopius was publiſhed in 1665. Le Clerc has obſerved, that Hammond in his Annotations on the new Teſtament borrowed largely from Grotius and Epiſcopius, and Tillotſon has been called a Diſciple of the latter. Epiſcopius acknowledges (Inſtitut. Theol. l. iv. cap. 34.) that Jeſus Chriſt is called in Scripture the *Son* of God, not merely on the account either of his *miraculous Conception*

tion, or of his *Mediation*, or of his *Reſurrection*, or of his *Aſcenſion*, but on a *fifth* account, which, in his opinion, clearly implies his *Pre-exiſtence*; yet he contends that it is not *neceſſary to Salvation*, either to know or believe this fifth mode of Filiation; *becauſe* it is not any where ſaid in Scripture to be neceſſary to be either known or believed; *becauſe* we may have faith in and pay obedience to Chriſt without knowing or believing it; *becauſe* for the three firſt centuries the Chriſtian Church did not eſteem a profeſſion of belief in this mode to be neceſſary to Salvation. Bp. Bull attacked with great learning this third reaſon of Epiſcopius; Le Clerc defended him as to a particular point (in his Hiſtoria Eccleſiaſtica, p. 636.), and has himſelf been animadverted on, with reſpect to this point, by Thirlby in his Notes on *Juſtin*'s Dialogue with *Trypho*; to ſay nothing of thoſe, on either ſide, who have been recently engaged in a ſimilar Controverſy.

Stephani Curcellæi Opera Theologica, quorum pars præcipua Inſtitutio Religionis Chriſtianæ. Amſtel. 1675. Curcellæus was a liberal and acute Divine; we are indebted to him for the edition of the works of Epiſcopius; his own were publiſhed after his death by Limborch.

Philippi a Limborch Theologia Chriſtiana; accedit Relatio Hiſtorica de origine et progreſſu Controverſiarum in Fœderato Belgio. Amſtel. 1715, and at the Hague in 1736. This is an excellent ſyſtem of Theology, yet the Author of it ingenuouſly preferred Mr. Locke's little Tract of the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, to this and all other Syſtems. *Syſtema Theologiæ me ſcripſiſſe noſti: non tamen eo in pretio apud me ſunt Syſtemata, ut non hunc exiguum tractatum* (Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity) *multis Syſtematibus præferam; imo plus veræ Theologiæ ex illo quam ex operoſis multorum Syſtematibus hauſiſſe me ingenue profiteor.* Limb. Let. to Locke. After the works of theſe three foreigners, (to which, but for fear of ſwelling the Catalogue, I would have added thoſe of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Zuinglius, &c.) I will mention a few of the moſt eminent of our Engliſh Divines; and he who will take the trouble of comparing their ſentiments with thoſe of the three foreign ones juſt mentioned, on any intricate point of Divinity, will certainly (whether they agree or diſagree in ſentiment) be qualified to form a rational judgment on the ſubject.

The Works of the pious and profoundly learned Joſeph Mede. Lond. 1664, and again in 1677. Modern expoſitors of the prophecies, contained in the Revelation and in the book of Daniel, have very properly availed themſelves of the lights held out to them by this great divine: what he has ſaid in this work concerning Goſpel Demoniacs being Lunatics, properly excited the attention of the learned to that queſtion, which has been very ably argued, on both ſides, ſince his time.

The Works of W. Chillingworth, M. A. of the Univerſity of Oxford, containing his Book, intitled, The Religion of Proteſtants a ſafe Way to Salvation; together with his nine Sermons, preached before the King, or upon eminent Occaſions; his Letter to Mr. Lewgar concerning the Church of Rome's being the Guide of Faith and Judge of Controverſies, his nine additional Diſcourſes, and his Anſwer to ſome Paſſages in Ruſhworth's Dialogues concerning Tradition. Lond. 1740. The 10th Ed. with his Life by Birch in 1742.

An Expoſition of the Creed by Bp. Pearſon. 12th Ed. Lond. 1741.

The

The Works of the learned Iſaac Barrow, D. D. (being all his Engliſh Works) in three Volumes, publiſhed by his Grace Dr. John Tillotſon, late Archbiſhop of Canterbury. Lond. 1741.

The Works of the moſt reverend Dr. John Tillotſon, Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury, with the Life of the Author. By Tho. Birch, A. M. 3 vol. Lond. 1752.

The Works of that eminent and moſt learned Prelate Dr. Ed. Stillingfleet, late Bp. of Worceſter, together with his Life and Character, 6 vol. Lond. 1710. When I was a young man, I had formed a mean opinion of the reaſoning faculties of Bp. Stillingfleet, from reading Mr. Locke's Letter and two Replies to him; but a better acquaintance with the Biſhop's works has convinced me that my opinion was ill-founded. Though no match for Mr. Locke in ſtrength and acuteneſs of argument, yet his *Origines Sacræ*, and other works, ſhew him to have been not merely a ſearcher into Eccleſiaſtical Antiquities, but a ſound Divine and a good Reaſoner.

Georgii Bulli Opera omnia, quibus duo præcipui Catholicæ fidei Articuli, de Trinitate et Juſtificatione, orthodoxe, perſpicue, ac ſolide explanantur, illuſtrantur, confirmantur, nunc demum in unum volumen collecta, ac multo correctiùs quam ante una cum generalibus indicibus edita. Quibus jam acceſſit ejuſdem Tractatus, hactenus ineditus, de Primitiva et Apoſtolica Traditione Dogmatis de Jeſu Chriſti Divinitate, contra Danielem Zuicherum ejuſque nuperos in Anglia Sectatores. Subnexa inſuper pluribus ſingulorum librorum Capitibus prolixa quandoque Annotata Joannis Erneſti Grabe, cujus etiam præfatio huic volumini eſt præmiſſa. Lond. 1703. This work of Bp. Bull is eſteemed by the learned, as one of the main pillars of what is called Orthodoxy: it was tranſlated into Engliſh, though I have never ſeen the tranſlation, by Francis Holland, A. M.

The Works of John Locke, Eſq. 3 vol. Lond. 1759. A later Ed. in 4 vol. 4to. in 1777.

The Works of Sam. Clarke, D. D. late Rector of St. James, with his Life by Bp. Hoadley. Lond. 1738, 4 vol.

The Works of Benjamin Hoadley, Bp. of Winchester. Lond. 1773, 3 vol. One knows not where to ſtop in this enumeration of great Divines; Hall, Jackſon, Beveridge, Scott, Fleetwood, Blackhall, Fiddes, Leſlie, &c. &c. all claim attention, and their works ought to find a place in every complete Theological Library.

A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion; being a Collection of the Sermons preached at the Lecture founded by the Hon. Robert Boyle (from the year 1691 to the year 1732), with the Additions and Amendments of the ſeveral Authors, and general Indexes, in 3 vol. Lond. 1739. Many of theſe Sermons have been publiſhed in ſeparate volumes, and there is an Abridgment of the whole. If all other Defences of Religion were loſt, there is ſolid Reaſoning enough (if properly weighed) in theſe three volumes to remove the Scruples of moſt Unbelievers.

A Preſervative againſt Popery, in ſeveral ſelect Diſcourſes upon the principal Heads of Controverſy between Proteſtants and Papiſts, written and publiſhed by the moſt eminent Divines of the Church of England, chiefly in the Reign of King James II. Lond. 1738, 2 vol. A third

vol. was publiſhed ſoon after. We are indebted to Bp. Gibſon for this Collection, if not for that alſo of the Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. Both theſe works may be very uſeful to young divines, in ſuggeſting to them much ſolid matter for their compoſitions for the pulpit.

Theſes Theologicæ variis temporibus in Academia Sedanenſi editæ, et ad diſputandum propoſitæ, auctore Ludovico Le Blanc. Lond. 1683. This work may very properly accompany the preceding, as it is written with great learning and candour, upon the principal ſubjects of Controverſy between the Roman and the Reformed Churches.

Petri Danielis Huetii Demonſtratio Evangelica. Ed. 3tia. Paris, 1690. This is a methodical work, replete with erudition. A valuable part of it is that in which the author endeavours to prove, *Mythologiam Ethnicorum omnem ex codicibus Sacris, ſacriſque hiſtoriis mutatis, diſſimulatis, interpolatis, prodiiſſe*; for, though he may carry his hypotheſis too far, of Moſes repreſenting, under different names, moſt of the Gods of the Heathens, yet the deduction of Heathen Mythology from Sacred Hiſtory is a ſtrong proof of the truth of the latter.

Eccleſiaſtical Polity, by Rich. Hooker. Lond. 1705.

An Expoſition of the 39 Articles, by Bp. Burnet.

A Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer, by W. Nichols, D. D. 2d Ed. Lond. 1712.

The Hiſtory of the Reformation of the Church of England, by Gilbert Burnet, 3 vol. Lond. 1679-81; and again in 1715. The author publiſhed an Abridgment of this work in one vol. 8vo. in 1682. The work itſelf was ſo well eſteemed, that, after the publication of the firſt part, both houſes of Parliament voted thanks to the author, and expreſſed their wiſhes that he would continue it.

An Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of Great Britain, chiefly of England, from the firſt Planting of Chriſtianity to the End of the Reign of King Charles the Second, with a brief Account of the Affairs of Religion in Ireland, collected from the beſt ancient Hiſtorians, Councils, and Records, by Jeremy Collier, M. A. Lond. 1708-14.

Annals of the Reformation and Eſtabliſhment of Religion, and other various Occurrences in the Church of England, by John Strype, M. A. in 4 vol. Lond. 1725-31. There is prefixed to the ſecond volume, a kind of teſtimonial of Mr. Strype's ability for writing an Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of the Church of England, at and after the firſt Reformation, and a recommendation of his work, ſigned by above twenty Biſhops.

The Church Hiſtory of England, from the year 1500 to the year 1688, chiefly with reſpect to the Catholics, being a complete Account of the Divorce, Supremacy, Diſſolution of Monaſteries, and firſt Attempts for a Reformation under King Henry VIII. the unſettled State of the Reformation under Ed. VI. the Interruption it met with from Queen Mary; with the laſt Hand put to it by Queen Elizabeth. Together with the various Fortunes of the Catholic Cauſe during the Reigns of King James I. King Charles I. King Charles II. King James II. Particularly the Lives of the moſt eminent Catholics, Cardinals, Biſhops, inferior Clergy, Regulars, and Laymen, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their Piety, Learning, or Military Abilities: alſo a diſtinct and critical Account of the Works of the Learned; the Trials

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of thoſe that ſuffered either on the Score of Religion, or the real or fictitious Plots againſt the Government; with the Foundations of all the Engliſh Colleges and Monaſteries abroad. The Whole ſupported by original Papers and Letters, many whereof were never before made public. To which is prefixed, a general Hiſtory of Eccleſiaſtical Affairs under the Britiſh, Saxon, and Norman Periods. 3 vol. Bruſſels, 1737. The Author's Name is not mentioned.

The Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of England to the eighteenth Century, by Ferd. Warner, D. D. Lond. 1756. Other Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians of our own Country are Bede, Fox, Fuller, Uſher, Parker, &c. &c.

Codex Juris Eccleſiaſtici Anglicani, or the Statutes, Conſtitutions, Canons, Rubricks, and Articles of the Church of England, methodically digeſted under their proper Heads, with a Commentary hiſtorical and judicial. Before it is an introductory Diſcourſe concerning the preſent State of the Power and Diſcipline and Laws of the Church of England, and after it an Appendix of Inſtruments ancient and modern, by Ed. Gibſon, Biſhop of London, 2d Ed. reviſed and corrected, with large Additions by the Author. Oxford, 1761, 2 vol. This is by much the moſt valuable work we have on this ſubject; it may be proper, however, to read along with it a pamphlet, ſaid to have been written by Judge Foſter, intitled, An Examination of the Scheme of Church Power, laid down in the Codex Juris Eccleſiaſtici Anglicani. Lond. 1736, 3d Ed.

Συνοδικον, ſive Pandectæ Canonum SS. Apoſtolorum et Conciliorum ab Eccleſia Græca receptorum, &c. per Gul. Beveregium. Oxon. 1672, 2 vol. Bp. Barlow ſays, that this work is of great uſe for a comprehenſive Knowledge of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity. If any one ſhould wiſh to have a collection of *Councils* in his library, he will find an enumeration of the principal writers on that ſubject in Bp. Barlow's Directions, &c. in Fabricus B. G. and in Bray's Bibl. Par. I have added the three following Works; for though they do not treat ſolely of Divinity, yet they will be very ſerviceable to a ſtudent in that ſcience.

Oeuvres diverſes de Mr. Bayle, Profeſſeur en Philoſophie et en Hiſtoire a Rotterdam. Contenant tout ce que cet Auteur a publié ſur des Matieres de Theologie, de Philoſophie, de Critique, d'Hiſtoire, et de Literature, excepté ſon Dictionnaire Hiſtorique et Critique. A la Haye, 1727, 4 vol.

A general Dictionary, Hiſtorical and Critical, in which a new and accurate Tranſlation of that of the celebrated Bayle is included; the whole containing the Hiſtory of the moſt illuſtrious Perſons of all Ages and Nations, particularly thoſe of Great Britain and Ireland, diſtinguiſhed by their Rank, Actions, Learning, and other Accounts: with Reflexions on thoſe Paſſages of Mr. Bayle which ſeem to favour Scepticiſm and the Manichee Syſtem. By the Rev. John Peter Bernard, the Rev. J. Birch, Mr. John Lockman, and other Hands. With the Life of Mr. Bayle by Mr. Des Maizeaux F. R. S. Lond. 1734-41, 10 vol. Thoſe who cannot meet with an opportunity of purchaſing this Dictionary, may content themſelves with Mr. Bayle's in 4 vol. or with thoſe of Moreri and Collier.

Biographia Britannica, or the Lives of the moſt eminent Perſons who have flouriſhed in Great Britain and Ireland, from the earlieſt Ages to the preſent Times: collected from the beſt Authorities, printed and manuſcript, and digeſted in the Manner of Mr. Bayle's Hiſtorical and

Critical Dictionary. The ſecond Ed. with Corrections and Enlargements, and the Addition of new Lives, by And. Kippis, D. D. and F. S. A. with the Aſſiſtance of other Gentlemen. Lond. 1778. Three volumes of this work are publiſhed; when it is finiſhed it will be one of the moſt complete works of the kind that ever appeared in any Language.

QUARTOS.

Biblia Hebraica ſine Punctis. Accurante Nath. Forſter S. T. B. Oxon. 1750.

Biblia Hebraica ad optimas quaſque Editiones expreſſa, cum Notis Maſorethicis, et numeris diſtinctionum in Paraſchas, et Capita, et Verſus, necnon ſingulorum Capitum ſummariis Latinis. Accurante M. Chriſtiano Reineccio. *Lipſ.* 1739.

Biblia Hebraica ſecundum Editionem Belgicam Everar. Vander Hooght, collatis aliis bonæ notæ Codicibus, una cum Verſione Latina Sebaſtiani Schmidii. Lipſ. 1740.

Variæ Lectiones Veteris Teſtamenti ex immenſa MSS. editorumque Codicum congerie hauſtæ, et ad Samar. Textum, ad vetuſtiſſ. verſiones, ad accuratiores S. Criticæ fontes ac leges examinatæ, opere ac ſtudio Johan. Bern. De Roſſi, S. T. P. et in R. Parmenſi Acad. Lin. Ori. Profeſſ. Parmæ, 1784-6, 3 vol. and a 4th is expected. This work is an uſeful Supplement to Kennicott's Hebrew Bible. Producuntur hic (ſays the Author) variæ Lectiones V. T. ex immenſa MSS. editorumque codicum congerie, id eſt, ex mille quadringentis ſeptuaginta et amplius ſacri Textus codicibus.

Vetus Teſtamentum ex Verſione Septuaginta Interpretum, ſecundum exemplar Vaticanum Romæ editum, accuratiſſime denuo recognitum, una cum Scholiis ejuſdem Editionis variis MSS. &c. lectionibus, ſumma cum cura edidit Lamb. Boſ. Franequeræ. 1709, 2 vol.

Jacobi Guſſetii Lexicon Linguæ Hebraicæ, in quo præcipua opera impenditur primario ſignificatui vocum phraſiumque accurata inveſtigatione definiendo, &c. Lipſiæ, 1743. Ed. 2da.

An Hebrew and Engliſh Lexicon without Points; to which is added, a methodical Hebrew Grammar, &c. by John Parkhurſt, M. A.

Clavis Hebraica Veteris Teſtamenti, in qua Themata difficiliora V. T. reſerantur, &c. auctore J. Leuſden. Ultrajecti, 1683.

Lyra Prophetica, ſive Analyſis Critico-Practica Pſalmorum. Studio Victorini Bythneri Poloni. Lond. 1664. Bythner obſerves, that all the Hebrew Radicals in the Bible amount to 1867; and that 564 Verſes, of which he makes mention, in the Pſalms, contain 1184 Radicals. But whether it is moſt proper to begin learning Hebrew by peruſing the poetical or hiſtorical books, let others judge; Leuſden's Clavis may be as uſeful for thoſe who begin with Geneſis, as Bythner's Lyra is for thoſe who begin with the Pſalms.

Edvardi Leigh Critica Sacra; id eſt, Obſervationes Philologico-Theologicæ in omnes radices et voces Hebræas V. T. et in omnes voces Græcas N. T. Gothæ, 1735, 2 vol. Ed. 6ta.

Joh. Fran. Buddei Hiſtoria veteris Teſtamenti ab orbe condito uſque ad Chriſtum Natum, variis Obſervationibus illuſtrata. Halæ Magdeburgicæ, 1726, 3 vol. Ed. 3tia.

The Hebrew Text, or the parallel Prophecies of Jacob and Moſes relating to the Twelve Tribes; with a Tranſlation and Notes; and the various Lections of near forty MSS. To which are added, 1. The Samaritan-Arabic Verſion of thoſe Paſſages, and Part of another Arabic Verſion made from the Samaritan Text; neither of which have been before printed: 2. A Map of the Land of Promiſe: 3. An Appendix containing four Diſſertations on Points connected with the Subjects of theſe Prophecies. By D. Durell, B. D. Oxford, 1763.

Iſaiah. A new Tranſlation, with a preliminary Diſſertation, and Notes critical, philological, and explanatory. By Rob. Lowth, D. D. Lord Biſhop of London. Lond. 1778.

Jeremiah and Lamentations. A new Tranſlation, with Notes critical, philological, and explanatory. By Benj. Blaney, B. D. Oxf. 1784.

An Attempt towards an improved Verſion, a Metrical Arrangement, and an Explanation of the twelve minor Prophets. By W. Newcome, D. D. Biſhop of Waterford. This excellent work is not inferior to either of the preceding, and all the three are particularly deſerving of attention.

A Commentary on the Book of Job, in which is inſerted the Hebrew Text and Engliſh Tranſlation: with a Paraphraſe, &c. By Leonard Chappelow, B. D. Camb. 1752, 2 vol.

A critical Diſſertation on the Book of Job: wherein the Account given of that Book by the Author of the Divine Legation of Moſes demonſtrated, &c. is particularly conſidered; the Antiquity of the Book vindicated; the great Text (chap. xix. 25.) explained; and a future State ſhewn to have been the popular Belief of the ancient Jews or Hebrews. By C. Peters, A. M. Lond. 1751, 2d Ed.

Annotations on the Pſalms, by James Merrick, M. A. Reading, 1768.

A Commentary on the Book of Pſalms; in which the literal or hiſtorical Senſe, as they relate to King David and the People of Iſrael, is illuſtrated, and their Application to the Meſſiah, to the Church, and to Individuals as Members thereof, is pointed out. By G. Horne, D. D. Oxf. 1776, 2 vol.

Marci Marini Brixiani Annotationes literales in Pſalmos nova Verſione illuſtratos, &c. Bononiæ, 1748, 2 vol.

Phil. D. Burkii Gnomon Pſalmorum. Stutgardiæ, 1760, 2 vol.

A philoſophical and critical Eſſay on Eccleſiaſtes: wherein the Author's Deſign is ſtated; his Doctrine vindicated; his Method explained in an analytical Paraphraſe annexed to a new Verſion of the Text from the Hebrew, &c. By A. V. Deſvoeux. Lond. 1760.

Phil. Dav. Burkii Gnomon in duodecim Prophetas minores, cum Præfatione Bengelii Heilibronnæ, 1753. A Commentary upon the twelve minor Prophets was publiſhed by John Markius in 4 vol. 4to. at Amſterdam, 1696, &c. This author (Markius) printed in ſeveral volumes many uſeful Diſſertations upon various parts of the old and new Teſtament: he was cotempary with Le Clerc, and differs from him in many of his works.

Vaticinia Chabacuci et Nachumi, itemque nonnulla Jeſaiæ, Micheæ, et Ezechielis oracula, Obſervationibus Hiſtorico-philologicis ex Hiſtoria

Diodori Siculi circa res Sardanapali illustrata. Auctore R. T. Gottlieb Kalinsky, cum Præfatione Burgii. Vratislaviæ, 1748.

Critical Remarks on the Books of Job, Proverbs, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles. By D. Durell, D. D. Oxf. 1772.

Poetical Parts of the old Testament, newly translated from the Hebrew, with Notes critical and explanatory. By W. Green, M. A. Lond. 1781.

De sacra Poesi Hebræorum Prælectiones Academicæ habitæ a Roberto Lowth, M. A. Collegii Novi nuper Socio, et Poeticæ Publico Prælectore. Subjicitur Metricæ Harianæ brevis Confutatio, et Oratio Crewiana. Oxon. 1753. This learned Work has been deservedly admired both at home and abroad. An edition was published at Gottingen, 1758, to which Notas et Epimetra adjecit *Michaelis*. This last edition has been printed in Ugolini Thesauro, vol. 31, where the reader will meet with many other tracts on Hebrew Poetry. The last ed. in 8vo. was printed in 1775. A good English translation of this work, by G. Gregory, F. A. S. was published in 1787, in 2 vol. 8vo.

Introductio ad Libros Canonicos veteris Testamenti omnes, præcognita critica et historica ac auctoritatis vindicias exponens. Adornata studio D. J. Gottlob Carpzovii. Lip. 1731. Ed. 2da. 2 vol. The reader will here find very learned disquisitions upon every book of the old Testament, and a catalogue of the most approved writers on each of them.

Joh. Gottlob Carpzovii Critica sacra veteris Testamenti: Parte 1. Circa Textum originalem; 2. Circa Versiones; 3. Circa Pseudo-criticam. Gul. Whistoni, solicita. Lipsiæ, 1728.

A critical History of the old Testament, in three Books, with a Supplement, being a Defence of the critical History in Answer to Mr. Spanheim's Treatise against it. By Father Simon. Englished by H. D. Lond. 1682.

D. Joan. Marshami Eq. Aur. et Bar. Chronicus Canon Egyptiacus Ebraicus, Græcus, et disquisitiones; liber non chronologiæ tantum sed et historicæ antiquitatis reconditissima complexus. Fanequeræ, 1696. This learned work was first published in folio in Lond. 1672, and afterwards in 4to. at Leipsic, 1676; which edition is followed by the author of the following work, which was written in opposition to an opinion embraced by Sir J. Marsham and others—that most of the Jewish Rites were borrowed from the Egyptians.

Hermanni Witsii Ægyptiaca, sive de Ægyptiacorum sacrorum cum Hebraicis collatione Libri tres. Et de decem Tribubus Israelis Liber singularis: accessit Diatribe de Legione fulminatrice Christianorum sub Imperatore Mar. Aur. Antonino. Amstel. 1683.

The Chronology of the ancient Kingdoms amended. To which is prefixed, a short Chronicle from the first Memory of Things in Europe to the Conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great. By Sir Isaac Newton. Lond. 1727.

The Chronology of the Hebrew Bible vindicated; the Facts compared with other ancient Histories; and the Difficulties explained, from the Flood to the Death of Moses. By Robert Lord Bishop of Clogher. Lond. 1747. He who wishes to know more on this subject of Chronology, may consult Jackson's Scripture Chronology, in 3 vol. 4to. Bedford's Scrip. Chron. published in 1730, and an Essay of Dr. Brett, wherein he defends the Computation of the Septuagint, 1729, &c. &c.

Had.

Had. Relandi Palæſtina ex Monumentis veteribus illuſtrata. Trajecti ad Rhe. 1714, 2 vol.

De Sacrificiis Libri duo; quorum altero explicantur omnia Judæorum, nonnulla Gentium profanarum, Sacrificia; altero Sacrificium Chriſti. Utroque Eccleſiæ Catholicæ his de Rebus Sententia contra Fauſtum Socinum ejuſque Sectatores defenditur. Auctore Gul. Outramo S. T. P. Lond. 1677.

The peculiar Doctrines of Revelation relating to piacular Sacrifices, Redemption by Chriſt, Faith in him, &c. in two Eſſays; to which are ſubjoined two Diſſertations: 1. On the Office of Jeſus Chriſt, as Mediator and Surety of the new Covenant. 2. On the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. By J. Richie, M. D. Warrington, 1766, 2 vol.

Antonii Van Dale Diſſertationes de Origine et Progreſſu Idololatriæ et Superſtitionum: de vera ac falſa Prophetia, uti et de Divinationibus Idololatricis Judæorum. Amſtel. 1696.

Antonii Van Dale de Oraculis veterum Ethnicorum Diſſertationes duæ, &c. Ed. 2da. Amſtel. 1700. Voſſius publiſhed a learned work in folio, 1668, intitled, De Origine ac Progreſſu Idololatriæ. Selden's Treatiſe De Diis Syris, with the Additions of Beyer, was publiſhed in 8vo. at Amſter. 1680: and another work with 88 copper-plates illuſtrative of the Idolatry of the Ancients was publiſhed at Mentz in 1699, under the title—Theatrum Ethnico-Idololatricum.

Of Idolatry: a Diſcourſe, in which is endeavoured a Declaration of its Diſtinction from Superſtition; its Notion, Cauſe, Commencement, and Progreſs; its Practice charged on Gentiles, &c. as alſo of the Means which God has vouchſafed for the Cure of it by the Shechinah of his Son. By Tho. Teniſon, B. D. Lond. 1678.

The Court of the Gentiles, or a Diſcourſe touching the Original of human Literature, both Philology and Philoſophy, from the Jewiſh Church. By Theop. Gale. Oxf. 1672, 2 vol. 2d Ed.

A critical and chronological Hiſtory of the Riſe, Progreſs, Declenſion, and Revival of Knowledge, chiefly religious, in two Periods. 1. The Period of Tradition from Adam to Moſes. 2. The Period of Letters from Moſes to Chriſt. By Hen. Winder, D. D. Lond. 1745, 2 vol.

Reflexions ſur l'Origine, l'Hiſtoire, et la Succeſſion des Anciens Peuples Chaldeens, Hebreux, Pheniciens, Egyptiens, Grecs, &c. juſques au Tems de Cyrus. Par M. Fourment, l'ainé. nov. Ed. a Paris, 1747, 2 vol.—The beſt naturaliſts of the age find great difficulty in admitting, that the earth had no exiſtence as a *terraqueous* globe before the æra aſſigned by Moſes for its creation, or at leaſt for its formation into water and dry land: and hence all arguments, tending to prove the origination of the human race to have been that which is mentioned in Scripture, are of great uſe: for, if the *antiquity* and the *civil hiſtory* of our ſpecies correſpond with the accounts delivered in the Bible, we cannot reaſonably (conſidering the imperfection of our knowledge) ſuffer our faith to be ſhaken by the difficulties attending the *natural hiſtory* of the earth. Viewed in this light, as well as in many others, the following work has the greateſt merit.

A new Syſtem, or an Analyſis, of ancient Mythology: wherein an Attempt is made to diveſt Tradition of Fable, and to reduce the Truth to

its original Purity. In this work is given the hiſtory of the Babylonians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Canaanites, Helladians, Ionians, Leleges, Dorians, Pelaſgi, alſo of the Scythæ, Indoſcythæ, Ethiopians, Phœnicians. The whole contains an Account of the principal Events in the firſt Ages from the Deluge to the Diſperſion; alſo of the various Migrations which enſued, and the Settlements made afterwards in different Parts: circumſtances of great Conſequence, which were ſubſequent to the Gentile Hiſtory of Moſes. By Jacob Bryant. Lond. 1774-6, 3 vol.

Jac. Bruckeri Hiſtoria Critica Philoſophiæ a Mundi Incunabulis ad noſtram uſque ætatem deducta. Lip. 1742, 5 vol.

Radulphi Cudworthi Syſtema Intellectuale hujus Univerſi, ſeu de variis Naturæ Rerum Originibus Commentarii, quibus omnis eorum Philoſophia qui Deum eſſe negant funditus evertitur. Accedunt reliqua ejus Opuſcula. T. L. Moſhemius omnia ex Anglico Latinè vertit, recenſuit, variiſque Obſervationibus, Diſſertationibus illuſtravit et auxit. Lug. Bat. 1773, Ed. 2da. emendatior et auctior, 2 vol.

Jo. Dav. Michaelis Syntagma Commentationum. Goettingæ, 1759. The fourth Diſſertation is intitled, Argumenta Immortalitatis Animorum humanorum ex Moſe collecta (auctore Chriſ. Colberg).

Novum Teſtamentum Græcum, ita adornatum ut Textus probatarum Editionum medullam, margo variantium Lectionum in ſuas Claſſes diſtributarum Locorumque parallelorum delectum; Apparatus ſubjunctus, Criſeos ſacræ Millianæ præſertim, compendium, &c. exhibeat; inſerviente Jo. Alberto Bengelio, Tubingæ, 1734. A ſecond edition of the Apparatus was printed at the ſame place in 1763: and an 8vo. edition of the Text, various Readings and parallel Places, with only one error of the preſs, and that a wrong accent, was publiſhed at Stutgard in 1734. Another 8vo. edition at Tubing, 1753.

Novum Teſtamentum Græcum ad fidem Græcorum ſolum Codicum MSS. expreſſum, adſtipulante Ja. Wetſtenio: juxta Sectiones Jo. Alber. Bengelii diviſum et nova Interpunctione ſæpius illuſtratum. Typis et ſumptibus Joh. Nichols. Lond. 1783, Ed. 2da.

A Concordance to the Greek Teſtament: with the Engliſh Verſion to each Word; the principal Hebrew Roots correſponding to the Greek Words of the Septuagint; ſhort critical Notes where neceſſary; and an Index for the benefit of the Engliſh Reader. By John Williams, LL. D. Lond. 1767.

A complete Concordance to the Holy Scriptures of the old and new Teſtament: in two Parts. By Alex. Cruden, M. A. Lond. 1758. And I believe there has been a later edition.

Petri Mintert Lexicon Græco-Latinum in N. T., in quo cujuſlibet vocis Etymon datur, Significationes variæ explicantur, eique Vox ſeu vocis Hebraicæ et Chaldaicæ, quando et pro quibus LXX. Interpretes illis uſi fuerint, apponuntur, et loca omnia N. T. in quibus leguntur, ordine annotantur, variantes etiam Lectiones adduntur. Francofurti ad Moenum, 1727. This, as its title indicates, is a learned work: it may ſupply the place of a Greek Concordance to the Septuagint and the new Teſtament.

A Greek and Engliſh Lexicon to the new Teſtament, &c. By John Parkhurſt, M. A. Lond. 1769.

heological Lectures at Weſtminſter Abbey, with an Interpretation of the new Teſtament; to which are added, Select Diſcourſes upon the principal Points of Revealed Religion. By John Heylin, D. D. Lond. 1749, Part I. and 1761, Part II.

ntroductory Lectures to the ſacred Books of the new Teſtament. By J. D. Michaelis. Lond. 1761. A new edition in 1780.

acrorum Evangeliorum Verſio Syriaca Philoxeniana ex Cod. MSS. Ridleianis in Bibl. Coll. Nov. Oxon. repoſitis nunc primum Edita: cum Interpretatione et Annotationibus Joſephi White, A. M. Ling. Arab. Prof. Laudiani. Oxon. 1778.

Le nouveau Teſtament de notre Seigneur Jeſus Chriſt, traduit en François ſur l'original Grec. Avec des Notes literales pour eclaircir le Texte. Par Meſſrs. De Beauſobre et Lenfant. Amſter. 1718, 2 vol.

The Family Expoſitor, or a Paraphraſe and Verſion of the new Teſtament, with critical Notes, and a practical Improvement of each Section. By P. Doddridge, D. D. Lond. 1761, 6 vol.

An Expoſition of the new Teſtament, both Doctrinal and Practical: in which is inſerted, 1. A correct Copy of the ſacred Text and the genuine Senſe thereof given: 2. The Truths of the Chriſtian Religion are ſet in a plain and clear Light: 3. Difficult Places explained: 4. Seeming Contradictions reconciled: and, 5. Whatever is material in the various Readings, and the ſeveral oriental Verſions, is obſerved. The Whole illuſtrated and confirmed from the moſt ancient Jewiſh Writings. By J. Gill, D. D. A new edition corrected. Lond. 1774, 5 vol.

Chriſtiani Schoettgenii Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ in univerſum novum Teſtamentum. Quibus Horæ J. Lightfoot in Libris hiſtoricis ſupplentur, Epiſtolæ et Apocalypſis eodem modo illuſtrantur. Accedunt Diſſertationes quædam Philologico-ſacræ. Dreſdæ, 1733, 2 vol. The ſame author publiſhed in 1742, in 2 vol. Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ in Theologiam Judæorum dogmaticam antiquam, et orthodoxum de Meſſia.

Novum Teſtamentum ex Talmude et antiquitatibus Hebræorum illuſtratum, curis clariſ. vir. Balth. Scheidii, Jo. And. Danzii et Jac. Rhenfordi, editumque una cum ſuis propriis Diſſertationibus de Naſi ſeu præſide Synedrii M. et de directoribus Scholarum Hebræorum. A Joh. Ger. Meuſchen. Lip. 1736.

Remarques hiſtoriques, critiques, et philologiques ſur le nouveau Teſtament, par feu M. De Beauſobre. A la Haye, 1742, 2 vol.

A Commentary and Notes on the four Evangeliſts and the Acts of the Apoſtles; together with a new Tranſlation of the Epiſtle to the Corinthians, with a Paraphraſe and Notes; to which are added other Theological Pieces, by Zach. Pearce, D. D. late Lord Biſhop of Rocheſter: to which is prefixed, ſome Account of his Lordſhip's Life and Character, written by himſelf. Lond. 1777, 2 vol.

A Harmony of the four Goſpels, in which the natural Order of each is preſerved, with a Paraphraſe and Notes. By James Macknight, D. D. Lond. 1763, 2 vol. 3d Ed. There are prefixed to this edition various preliminary obſervations; ſix chronological diſſertations; nine diſcourſes on Jewiſh antiquities; and an eſſay on the demoniacs, all of which have great merit. A Latin tranſlation of this work came out at Bremen, 1772.

A Harmony of the Evangeliſts in Engliſh, with critical Diſſertations, an occaſional Paraphraſe, and Notes for the Uſe of the unlearned. By J. Prieſtley, LL.D. F. R. S. Lond. 1780. The reader may alſo conſult a new Harmony of the Goſpels, by John Jebb, M. A. Camb. 1772, 2d Ed.

Diſcourſes on the four Goſpels, chiefly with regard to the peculiar Deſign of each, and the Order and Places in which they were written. To which is added, an Enquiry concerning the Hours of St. John, of the Romans, and of ſome other Nations of Antiquity. By J. Townſon, B. D. Oxf. 1778.

The Hiſtory of the Life of Jeſus Chriſt, taken from the new Teſtament, with Obſervations and Reflections proper to illuſtrate the Excellence of his Character and the Divinity of his Miſſion and Religion. By the late Rev. G. Benſon, D. D. To which is added, Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of the Author. Lond. 1764.

Obſervations on our Lord's Conduct as a Divine Inſtructor, and on the Excellence of his moral Character, by W. Newcome, D. D. Biſhop of Waterford. Lond. 1782.

The Hiſtory of the firſt Planting of the Chriſtian Religion, taken from the Acts of the Apoſtles and their Epiſtles, together with the remarkable Facts of the Jewiſh and Roman Hiſtory, which affected the Chriſtians within this period. By G. Benſon, D. D. Lond. 1756, 2d Ed. 3 vol.

A new Verſion of St. Matthew's Goſpel, with ſelect Notes, wherein the Verſion is vindicated, and the Senſe and Purity of ſeveral Words and Expreſſions in the original Greek are ſettled and illuſtrated; to which is added, a Review of Dr. Mill's Notes on this Goſpel. By D. Scott, J. U. D. Lond. 1741.

A new Tranſlation of the Goſpel of St. Matthew: with Notes critical, philological, and explanatory. By Gilbert Wakefield, B. A. Lond. 1782.

Commentarius Analytico-Exegeticus tam literalis quam realis Evangelii ſecundum Joannem. Authore Fred. Adol. Lampe. Amſtel. 1724-6, 3 vol. This is the moſt valuable work on St. John's Goſpel that was ever publiſhed.

A Paraphraſe and Notes on the Epiſtles of St. Paul to the Coloſſians, Philippians, and Hebrews, after the Manner of Mr. Locke. To which are annexed, ſeveral critical Diſſertations on particular Parts of Scripture. The ſecond Ed. By the late reverend and learned Mr. James Peirce, of Exon. With a Paraphraſe and Notes on the three laſt Chapters of the Hebrews left unfiniſhed by Mr. Peirce; and an Eſſay to diſcover the Author of the Epiſtle, and the Language in which it was originally written. By J. Hallet, Jun. Lond. 1733.

A Paraphraſe and Notes on ſix of the Epiſtles of St. Paul, viz. I. Theſſ. II. Theſſ. I. Timothy, Philemon, Titus, II. Tim. attempted in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner. To which are annexed, critical Diſſertations. By G. Benſon, D. D. Lond. 1752, 2d Ed.

A Paraphraſe and Notes on the Epiſtle to the Romans; to which is prefixed, a Key to the Apoſtolic Writings, or an Eſſay to explain the Goſpel Scheme, and the principal Words and Phraſes the Apoſtles have uſed in deſcribing it. By J. Taylor, Miniſter of the Goſpel in Norwich. Lond. 1754, 3d Ed.

Paraphrafe and Notes on the Epiſtles of St. Paul to the Galatians and Epheſians, by S. Chandler, D. D. Publiſhed from the Author's MS. Lond. 1777.

Paraphrafe and Notes on the Epiſtle to the Hebrews. To which is prefixed, an Enquiry—into the Author of this Epiſtle; when it was wrote; the Manner of citing the old Teſtament; and the Method of reaſoning in it: with ſome Remarks on the late Lord Bolingbroke's Treatment of St. Paul. By Arthur Aſhley Sykes, D. D. Lond. 1755.

Paraphrafe and Notes on the ſeven (commonly called) Catholic Epiſtles, by George Benſon, D. D. Lond. 1756, 2d Ed.

nacriſis Apocalypſeos Joannis Apoſtoli, qua in veras interpretandæ ejus Hypotheſes diligenter inquiritur, et ex iiſdem interpretatio facta, certis hiſtoriarum monumentis confirmatur atque illuſtratur: tum quoque quæ Meldenſis Præſul Boſſuetus hujus libri commentario ſuppoſuit, et exegetico Proteſtantium Syſtemati in viſis de Beſtia ac Babylone Myſtica objecit, fedulo examinantur. Auctore Carop. Vitringa. Ed. altera. Amſtel. 1719.—Heidegger, in 1687, publiſhed two volumes in 4to. upon the prophecy in the Revelation, De Babylone magna, and endeavoured by a variety of arguments to eſtabliſh this concluſion—*Hierarchiam ſeu Clerum Eccleſiæ Romanæ dominantem Babylonem magnam eſſe.*

A perpetual Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, with a preliminary Diſcourſe concerning the Principles upon which the ſaid Revelation is to be underſtood. By Charles Daubuz, M. A. late Vicar of Brotherton in Yorkſhire. New modelled, abridged, and rendered plain to the meaneſt Capacity, by Peter Lancaſter, A. M. Lond. 1730.

Obſervations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypſe of St. John, in two Parts. By Sir Iſaac Newton. Lond. 1733.

A Paraphraſe and Notes on the Revelation of St. John. By Moſes Lowman. Lond. 1745, 2d Ed. A third Ed. in 8vo, 1773.

Oeuvres de Meſſire Jacques-Benigne Boſſuet Evêque de Meaux, &c. Nouvelle Ed. a Paris, 1772. In the preface to the third vol. there is this obſervation—Le Commentaire ſur l' Apocalypſe qui occupe la plus grande Partie de ce Volume, a pour Objet principe de découvrir l' abus énorme que les Miniſtres Proteſtans, et ſurtout le fameux Jurieu, faiſoient de ce Livre divin, pour charger l' Egliſe Catholique des plus horribles Imputations en la repreſentant comme la Babylone dont il eſt parlé dans Saint Jean.—Biſhop Hurd has very properly remarked, "that the Biſhop of Meaux knew what he did, when he *affected* a contempt of *Joſeph Mede*. He was then at liberty to turn himſelf from the ableſt advocate of the Proteſtant cauſe to the *weakeſt*, *M. Jurieu*."

A Critical Hiſtory of the Text of the new Teſtament, wherein is firmly eſtabliſhed the Truth of thoſe Acts on which the Foundation of the Chriſtian Religion is laid. By Father Simon. Lond. 1689-92, 2 vol.

Fabricii Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus Scriptorum, qui Veritatem Religionis Chriſtianæ adverſus Atheos, Epicureos, Deiſtas ſeu Naturaliſtas, Idololatras, Judæos, et Muhammedanos, Lucubrationibus ſuis aſſeruerunt. Hamburgi, 1725. The Title of this work ſufficiently indicates its nature and utility. A Treatiſe of a nature ſomewhat ſimilar to this was publiſhed by Walchius in 1752, in 8vo. intitled, Introductio

ductio ad Theologiam Polemicam; in which the points controverte
by Atheists, Deists, Jews, &c. are discussed with great accuracy.

La Religion Chrétienne prouvée par les Faits. Par M. l' Abbé Houtte
ville. Nouvelle Ed. a Paris, 1740, 3 vol. This book is written wit
good judgment; the third volume is taken up in answering deistica
objections.

The Truth of the Gospel History, by James Macknight, D. D. Lond
1763.

Philippi a Limborch de Veritate Religionis Christianæ amica Collati
cum erudito Judæo. Goudæ, 1687.

Salomonis Glassii Philologia Sacra, qua totius SS. veteris et novi Testa
menti Scripturæ, tum Stylus et Literatura, tum Sensus et genuin
Interpretationis ratio et doctrina, libris quinque expenditur ac traditu
Lipsiæ, 1743. This work was first published in 1623, and it is sti
much esteemed. Buddeus, in a preface prefixed to this edition, an
written in 1713, expresses the sentiments of the learned concerning i
in the following terms—Consentiunt in eo omnes, huncce ex eorum
genere librum esse qui sacrarum literarum cultoribus non tantum utile
sed prorsus necessarii sint, et quo nemo carere queat, qui ad scriptura
sacræ lectionem et interpretationem solide et accurate instituendam
animum adjungit.—The last edition was published at Leipsic in 177
by Professor Dathius, under this title: Philologia Sacra his temporibu
accommodata.

Commentatio critica ad Libros N. T. in genere. Cum Præfatione D
J. Gottlob Carpzovii. Accurante J. W. Rumpæo. Lip. 1757, Ed
2da. Critical questions of great variety and importance, relative t
the new Testament, are here solidly discussed, by a reference to the wri
ters of the greatest credit on each of them.

Camp. Vitringa Observationum Sacrarum Libri sex, in quibus de Rebu
varii Argumenti et utilissimæ investigationis critice ac theologic
differitur, &c. Amster. 1727, 2 vol. 3d Ed. and a 7th Book. Franc
queræ, 1727.

Joan. F. Buddei Miscellanea Sacra. Jenæ, 1727, 3 vol. The last vo
lume contains Dissertationes Theologicas sub ejus Moderamine pub
lico Eruditorum examini expositas.

Samuelis Werenfelsii Opuscula Theol. Philos. et Philologica. Basiliæ, 1718

D. Salomonis Deylingi Observationes Sacræ. In quibus multa Scrip
turæ veteris ac novi Testamenti dubia vexata solvuntur, &c. Lipsiæ
1739, 5 vol. Ed. 3tia.

Jo. Christopheri Wolfii Curæ philologicæ et criticæ in omnes Libros N.
T. quibus integritati contextus Græci consulitur, census verborum
ex præsidiis philologicis illustratur, diversæ Interpretum sententiæ sum
matim enarrantur, et modesto examini subjectæ vel approbantur ve
reselluntur. Basiliæ, 1741, 5 vol. This work has some resemblance
in the manner of its composition, to Poole's Synopsis, but is written
with more judgment, and contains the opinions of many expositor
who have lived since the publication of Poole's work. Wolfius
moreover, has not followed Poole in simply relating the sentiments o
others, but has frequently animadverted on them with great critica
discernment.

Jo. Christ. Koecheri Analecta Philologica et Exegitica in IV. S. Evan
geli

gelia quibus Wolfii Curæ philologicæ fupplentur atque augentur. Altenburgi, 1766.

ritical Conjectures and Obfervations on the new Teftament, collected from various Authors, as well in regard to Words as Pointing, with the Reafons on which both are founded. By W. Bowyer. Lond. 1783, Ed. 3d. The reader will here meet with much found criticifm, and many inftances of the importance of true Punctuation, which Mr. Bowyer thought of more moment than all the various readings put together.

. C. B. Michaelis Tractatio critica de variis Lectionibus novi Teftamenti cautè colligendis et dilucidandis. Halæ Magd. 1749.

. Jo. Alberti Bengelii Gnomon novi Teftamenti, in quo ex nativa verborum vi, fimplicitas, profunditas, concinnitas, falubritas fenfuum cœleftium indicatur. Tubingæ, 1759, Ed. 2da. The defign of this work is properly declared by the learned Author, when he fays—Hoc denique agitur, ut quæ in fententiis verbifque Scripturæ N. T. fita vis fit, neque tamen primo ab omnibus obfervatur, ea breviter monftretur.

ubia Evangelica in tres Partes diftributa; quibus dubia partim ἐξηγητικὰ partim ἐλεγκτικὰ difcuffa et vindicata a cavillis et corruptelis Atheorum, Paganorum, Judæorum, Samofatenianorum et Anabaptiftarum, Pontificiorum et Sectariorum aliorum, operâ Fred. Spanhemii. Genevæ, 1658, 2 vol.

iftoria Eccleiaftica duorum primorum a Chrifto nato Sæculorum, e veteribus Monumentis deprompta, a J. Clerico. Amftel. 1716.

h. Lauren. Mofheim de Rebus Chriftianorum ante Conftantinum Magnum Commentarii. Helmftadii, 1753.

homæ Ittigii Lipfienfis de Hæreiarchis Ævi Apoftolici et Apoftolico proximi, feu primi et fecundi a Chrifto nato Sæculi. Lipf. 1690.

ppendix Differtationis de Hæreiarchis, &c. auct. T. Ittigio. Lip. 1696.

he Hiftory of the Hereties of the two firft Centuries after Chrift, containing an Account of their Time, Opinions, and Teftimony to the Books of the new Teftament. By Nat. Lardner, D. D. Lond. 1780.

red. Spanhemii brevis Introductio ad Hiftoriam facram utriufque Teftamenti, ac præcipue Chriftianam, ad an. 1518, inchoata jam Refor. Ed. fere nova, omnium purgatiffima. Lugd. Bat. 1694.

oan. Dallæi de Ufu Patrum ad ea definienda Religionis capita quæ funt hodie controverfa. Genevæ, 1686. This very excellent book appeared firft in French, 1632, and it was tranflated into Engliih in 1651.

alutaris Lux Evangelii, toti Orbi per Divinam gratiam exoriens; five Noritia hiftorico-chronologica, literaria, et geographica propagatorum per Orbem Terrarum Chriftianorum facrorum, delineata a Joan. Alb. Fabricio. Hamb. 1731. There is fubjoined to this work a Geographical Index of all the Bifhopricks which have formerly fubfifted, or do at prefent fubfift, in Chriftendom. All the works of Fabricius are full of erudition, and deferve the peculiar attention of young divines.

afparis Zeigleri de Epifcopis eorumque Juribus, Privilegiis, et vivendi ratione Liber Commentarius, ex variis veteri; Eccleiæ Monumentis atque feriptis collectus, inque gratiam Juris Canonici ftudiofornm publicæ luci expofitus. Norimbergæ, 1686. In this book a great many curious queftions are propofed in great order, and difcuffed with much learning.

The

The Hiſtory of the Puritans, or Proteſtant Non-Conformiſts. By Dan Neale, M. A. Lond. 1754, 2 vol. 2d Ed.

Tracts on the Liberty, Spiritual and Temporal, of Proteſtants in Eng land. By Anthony Ellis, D. D. late Lord Biſhop of St. David's Lond. 1767, 2d Ed.

Inſtitutio Theologiæ Elencticæ, in qua Status Controverſiæ perſpicu exponitur, præcipua orthodoxorum Argumenta proponuntur et vind cantur, et fontes ſolutionum aperiuntur. Authore Fran. Turretino Genevæ, 1689, 3 vol.

Franciſci Turretini de Satisfactione Chriſti Diſputationes. Gen. 1666.

De neceſſaria Seceſſione noſtra ab Eccleſia Romana, et impoſſibili cur ea Synchretiſmo Diſputationes. Aut. Fran. Turretino; acceſſit eju dem Diſputationum miſcellanearum decas. Genevæ, 1688.

Joh. Alphonſi Turretini Cogitationes et Diſſertationes Theologicæ quibus Principia Religionis cum Naturalis tum Revelatæ adſtruuntu et defenduntur, Animique ad Veritatis, Pietatis, et Pacis ſtudium ex citantur. Genevæ, 1737, 2 vol.

Syntagma Theſium Theologicarum in Academia Salmurienſi variis tem poribus diſputatarum. Salmurii, 1664, Ed. 2da.

Franciſci Burmanni Synopſis Theologiæ, et ſpeciatim œconomiæ fœde rum Dei ab initio ſæculorum uſque ad conſummationem eorum. Tra jecti ad Rhenum, 1687, 2 vol.

A Courſe of Lectures on the principal ſubjects in Pneumatology, Ethics and Divinity; with references to the moſt conſiderable Authors o each Subject. By the late Rev. Philip Doddridge, D. D. Lond. 1763.

The Oeconomy of the Goſpel, in four Books. By C. Bulkley, Lond. 176

The Works of the late reverend and learned Iſaac Watts, D. D. Lond 1753, 6 vol.

The Works of the Right Reverend T. Newton, D. D. late Lord Biſho of Briſtol; with ſome Account of his Life, and Anecdotes of hi Friends, written by himſelf. Lond. 1782, 3 vol.

The Works of the Right Reverend T. Wilſon, D. D. Lord Biſhop o Sodor and Man. With his Life compiled from authentic Papers, b C. Crutwell. Lond. 1781, 2 vol.

The Works of the Right Reverend W. Warburton, D. D. Lord Biſho of Glouceſter. Lond. 1788, 7 vol.

A Syſtem of Revealed Religion, digeſted under proper heads, and com poſed in the Words of Scripture, by Jo. Warden, M. A. Lond. 1769.

OCTAVOS, &c.

Biblia Hebraica ſecundum ultimam Editionem Joſ. Athiæ a J. Leuſde denuo recognitam recenſita, atque ad Maſoram, et correctiones Bom bergi, Stephani, Plantini, aliorumque Editiones exquiſitè adornata variiſque Notis illuſtrata, ab Everardo Vander Hooght, V. D. M. Ec longe accuratiſſima. Amſtel. et Ultraj. 1705, 2 vol.

Vetus Teſtamentum ex Verſione Septuaginta Interpretum, ſecundun exemplar Vaticanum Romæ editum. Præfationem, una cum varii Lectionibus e præſtantiſſimis MSS. Codicibus Bibliothecæ Leidenſi deſcriptis, præmiſit David Millius. Amſtel. 1725.

Vetus Teſtamentum Græcum ex Verſione Septuaginta Interpretur juxt

juxta exemplar Vaticanum Romæ editum. Cantab. 1665. This is a very fair edition of the Septuagint printed by Field, with a preface by Bp. Pearſon, at the end of which he recommends a collation of the MSS. of the Septuagint. Mintert made uſe of this edition in compoſing his Lexicon.

lavis Pentateuchi; ſive Analyſis omnium Vocum Hebraicarum ſuo ordine in Pentateucho Moſeos occurrentium; una cum Verſione Latina et Anglica. In uſum juventutis Academiæ Edinburginæ. Cui præmittuntur Diſſertationes duæ: 1. De Antiquitate Linguæ Arabicæ. 2. De genuina Punctorum Vocalium Antiquitate. Auctore Jacob. Robertſon S. T. P. Edinb. 1770. An approved edition of this author's Hebrew Grammar was publiſhed in Lond. 1784.

Diſſertation concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents. By T. Gill, D. D. Lond. 1767.

rancíſci Maſclef Grammatica Hebraica, a Punctis aliiſque inventis Maſorethicis libera, &c. Paris, 1731, 2 vol.

hriſtiani Stockii Clavis Linguæ ſanctæ veteris Teſtamenti. Lipſiæ, 1753, Ed. 6ta.

o. Chriſ. Clodii Lexicon Hebraicum ſelectum, in quo Voces rariores et obſcuræ Codicis Hebræi Biblici illuſtrantur, &c. in Supplementum Lexici Guſſetiani. Lipſ. 1744.

oan. Dav. Michaelis Epiſ de LXX. Hebdomadibus Danielis. Ad D. Joan. Pringle Baronetum. Lond. 1772.

bſervations on divers Paſſages of Scripture, placing many of them in a Light altogether new; aſcertaining the Meaning of ſeveral not determinable by the Methods commonly made uſe of by the learned; propoſing to Conſideration probable Conjectures on others, different from what have been hitherto recommended to the Attention of the curious; and more amply illuſtrating the reſt, than has been done, by means of Circumſtances incidentally mentioned in Books of Voyages and Travels into the Eaſt. Lond. 2d Ed. 1776, 2 vol. Two additional volumes were publiſhed in 1787. The deſign of this work is very uſeful, and it has been executed with great ability by the author, the Rev. Mr. Harmer. We are indebted to the ſame author for the outlines of a new Commentary on Solomon's Song, drawn by the help of Inſtructions from the Eaſt. Lond. 1768, 8vo. The Society which was inſtituted in the courſe of the laſt year at *Calcutta*, under the auſpices of Sir *William Jones*, for enquiring into the Hiſtory civil and natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Aſia, will, it is to be hoped, contribute not a little, by their reſearches, to the improvement of this kind of ſcriptural criticiſm; as well as to the enlargement of our knowledge in many other particulars.

emarks on ſelect Paſſages of the old Teſtament. By the late Benjamin Kennicott, D. D. Lond. 1787. This learned Work, though neither ſo perfect or extenſive as it would have been had the author lived to finiſh it, will be found very uſeful if a new tranſlation of the old Teſtament ſhould be made.

n Eſſay for a new Tranſlation of the Bible. Wherein is ſhewn, from Reaſon and the authority of the beſt Commentators, Interpreters, and Critics, that there is a Neceſſity for a new Tranſlation. Lond. 1727, 2d Ed.

Apparatus Biblicus; or an Introduction to the holy Scriptures. In thre
Books. 1. Of the original Hiſtory and Antiquity of the Jews. 2. C
the Canon, Authors, original Texts, Verſions, Editions, and Interpre
tations of Scripture. 3. Of the falſe Gods, Animals, precious Stone
Diſeaſes, and public Sports, mentioned in the Scriptures. Togethe
with an Explanation of the ſcriptural Names, and a new Reading c
the Scriptures. Done into Engliſh from the French of *Pere Lam*
with Notes and Additions. Illuſtrated with 36 Copper-plates. Lond
1728, 2d Ed. 2 vol. This work will be very uſeful to thoſe who hav
not leiſure to conſult larger treatiſes on the ſubjects which are diſcu
ſed in it.

Antiquitates Hebraicæ, ſecundum triplicem Judæorum Statum eccleſiaſt
cum, politicum, et œconomicum breviter delineatæ, a Conrado Ik
nio. Bremæ, 1741, Ed. 3tia; the 1ſt Ed. in 1732. Reland's Ant
quitates Sacræ have been publiſhed in different forms, and they are t
be met with in Ugolini Theſauro, with Annotations by the Edito
This Book of Ikenius is valuable for its brevity, method, and perſp
cuity.

Origines Hebrææ: The Antiquities of the Hebrew Republick. By Th
Lewis, M. A. Lond. 1724-5, 4 vol. This is a laborious compilatio
from the moſt diſtinguiſhed writers, whether Jews or Chriſtians, on th
manners and laws of the Hebrews.

Jewiſh Antiquities; or a Courſe of Lectures on the three firſt Books
Godwin's Moſes and Aaron. To which is annexed, a Diſſertation c
the Hebrew Language, by Dav. Jennings, D. D. Lond. 1766, 2 vo
The Treatiſes of Mr. Lowman on the Ritual and on the civil Gover
ment of the Hebrews, may properly accompany theſe works on th
Hebrew Antiquities.

Revelation examined with Candour. Lond. 1735-63, 3 vol. by Dr. D
lany.

Lettres de quelques Juifs, Portugais, et Allemands, a M. De Voltair
Avec des Reflections critiques, et un petit Commentaire extrait d' u
plus grand. A Paris, 1776, 3 vol. 4th Ed. Theſe letters contain
elegant anſwer to the various objections to revealed religion whi
Voltaire has borrowed from our Engliſh Deiſts; they were writt
by the Abbé Guenée. An Engliſh tranſlation of them by Dr. Lefa
was publiſhed at Dublin in 1778, 2 vol.

A Vindication of the ſacred Books, and of Joſephus, eſpecially the fo
mer, from various Miſrepreſentations and Cavils of M. De Voltai
By Rob. Findlay, A. M. Glaſgow, 1770. This is a ſerious and fol
refutation of many of M. De Voltaire's moſt formidable objections
the ſacred writings.

A critical Hiſtory of the Life of David: In which the principal Ever
are ranged in Order of Time; the chief Objections of Mr. Bayle a
others againſt the Character of this Prince, &c. are refuted. By
Chandler, D. D. Lond. 1766, 2 vol.

Codex Pſeudepigraphus veteris Teſtamenti collectus, caſtigatus, teſtim
niiſque, cenſuris, et animadverſionibus illuſtratus, a Fabricio Ham
1722, 2 vol.

Novum Teſtamentum Græce. Textum ad fidem Codicum Verſionu
et Patrum emendavit, et Lectionis varietatem adjecit, Jo. Jac. Gri
ba

bach Theologiæ Doctor, ejuſdemque in Academ. Jenen. Profeſſor publ. Ordinarius. Halæ, 1777, 2 vol.

The new Teſtament carefully collated with the Greek and corrected; divided and pointed according to the various Subjects treated of by the inſpired Writers, with the common Diviſion into Chapters and Verſes in the Margin. And illuſtrated with Notes critical and explanatory. By R. Wynne, A. M. Lond. 1764, 2 vol.

The Hiſtory of the Miniſtry of Jeſus Chriſt, combined from the Narrative of the four Evangeliſts, by Rob. Willan, M. D. Lond. 1782.

A View of our bleſſed Saviour's Miniſtry, and the Proofs of his Divine Miſſion ariſing from thence. Together with a Charge, Diſſertations, Sermons, and Theological Lectures. By the late Tho. Randolph, D. D. Lady Margaret's Prof. of Divinity in the Univerſity of Oxford. Oxf. 1784, 2 vol.

Chriſtiani Stockii Clavis Linguæ Sanctæ novi Teſtamenti. Lip. 1752. Ed. 5a. In the prefaces to his Lexicons, Stockius has enumerated the principal Hebrew and Greek Lexicons of the Bible which were publiſhed before his own.

J. Conr. Schwarz Commentarii critici et philologici Linguæ Græcæ novi Fœderis. Lipſ. 1736, 2 vol. very ſmall 4to.

Georgii Pritii Introductio ad Lectionem N. T. in qua quæ ad rem criticam hiſtoriam, chronologiam, et geographiam pertinent breviter et perſpicue exponuntur. Lipſiæ, 1704. the 4th Ed. in 1737. I have never met with any book ſuperior to this as an introduction to the new Teſtament.

Juſti Henningii Böhmeri XII Diſſertationes Juris Eccleſiaſtici Antiqui. Halæ, 1729, Ed. 2da. This is a very excellent book: the titles of the Diſſertations are, 1. De Stato Chriſtianorum Die. 2. De antelucanis Chriſtianorum cœtibus. 3. De Confœderata Chriſtianorum Diſciplina. 4. De coitionibus Chriſtianorum ad capiendum cibum. 5. De Chriſtianorum cœtibus in vicis et agris. 6. De Cognitionibus de Chriſtianis. 7. De differentia inter Ordinem Eccleſiaſticum et Plebem, ſeu inter Clericos et Laicos. 8. De Confeſſu Ordinis Eccleſiaſtici. 9. De Eccleſiæ Statu antiquo generatim. 10. De Jure Laicorum ſacerdotali. 11. De Jure dandi Baptiſmum. 12. De extraordinario primitivæ Eccleſiæ ſtatu.

Jo. Franciſci Buddei Eccleſia Apoſtolica, ſive de Statu Eccleſiæ Chriſtianæ ſub Apoſtolis Commentatio Hiſtorico-Dogmatica; quæ et Introductionis loco in Epiſtolas Pauli cæterorumque Apoſtolorum eſſe queat. Jenæ, 1729. The author has briefly treated this important ſubject with great judgment, and referred to a variety of uſeful writers.

Miſcellanea Sacra: containing an Abſtract of the Scripture Hiſtory of the Apoſtles, in a new Method. With four critical Eſſays: 1. On the Witneſs of the holy Spirit. 2. On the Diſtinction between Apoſtles, Elders, and Brethren. 3. On the Time when Paul and Barnabas became Apoſtles. 4. On the Apoſtolical Decree. To which is added, an Eſſay on the Diſpenſations of God to Mankind, as revealed in Scripture: together with a Diſſertation on Hebrews xii. 22—25, now firſt publiſhed. A new Ed. with large Additions and Corrections. Lond. 1782, 3 vol. The merit of this work is generally acknow-

ledged; Dr. Benſon owned himſelf much indebted to it in his hiſtory of the firſt Planting of Chriſtianity, and in ſome other of his works.

A new Introduction to the Study and Knowledge of the new Teſtament, by E. Harwood, D. D. Lond. 1773, 2d Ed. 2 vol.

The ſacred Interpreter: or a practical Introduction towards a beneficial reading of the Bible. Containing, 1. An Hiſtory of the four antient Monarchies. 2. A general View of the Jewiſh Church to the taking of Jeruſalem. 3. Remarks on the Pentateuch, Prophets, Goſpels, &c. ſhewing the Deſign of each Book. 4. An exact Chronology of the Scriptures. 5. A Diſſertation on revealed Religion, and an Account of thoſe Divines who have defended it. 6. Difficult Texts explained, &c. By David Collyer. Lond. 1726-46, 2 vol.

Dominici Diodati, T. C. Neapolitani de Chriſto Græce loquente Exercitatio; qua oſtenditur Græcam ſeu Helleniſticam Linguam cum Judæis omnibus, tum ipſi adeo Chriſto et Apoſtolis nativam ac vernaculam fuiſſe. Neapoli, 1767. The reader will meet with ſome obſervations on this ſubject in Bowyer's Preface to his Conjectures on the new Teſtament.

Problema de anno Nativitatis Chriſti, ubi occaſionem offerente vetere Herodis Antipæ Nummo, in Nummophylacio Clementis XIV. P. O. M. Aſſervato demonſtratur, Chriſtum natum eſſe anno VIII. ante Æram vulgarem, contra veteres omnes et recentiores Chronologos. Auctore P. Dominico Magnan. Romæ, 1772.

Jacobi Elſneri Obſervationes ſacræ in novi Fœderis Libros, quibus plura illorum Librorum loca ex Auctoribus potiſſimum Græcis et Antiquitate exponuntur et illuſtrantur. Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1720, 2 vol.

Joan. Alberti Obſervationes Philologicæ in ſacros novi Fœderis Libros. Lugd. Bat. 1725.

Geor. Raphelii Annotationes in S. Scripturam, hiſtoricæ in vetus, philologicæ in N. T. ex Xenophonte, Polybio, Arriano, et Herodoto collectæ. Lugd. Bat. 1750, 2 vol.

Eliæ Palairet Obſervationes Philologico-criticæ in ſacros novi fœderis Libros, quorum plurima loca ex Auctoribus potiſſimum Græcis exponuntur, illuſtrantur, vindicantur. Lugd. Bat. 1752.

Jo. Tobiæ Krebſii Obſervationes in novum Teſtamentum e Flavio Joſepho. Lipſ. 1755.

Georg. Davidis Kype Obſervationes ſacræ in novi fœderis Libros ex Auctoribus potiſſimum Græcis et Antiquitatibus. Wrabſlaviæ, 1755.

Jo. Bap. Ottii Spicilegium, ſive excerptum ex Flavio Joſepho ad N. Teſtam. illuſtrationem. Lugd. Bat. 1741.

A free and impartial Study of the holy Scriptures recommended: being Notes on ſome particular Texts, with Diſcourſes and Obſervations on various Subjects. By Joſ. Hallet, Jun. Lond. 1729-36, 3 vol.

The ſacred Claſſics defended and illuſtrated: or an Eſſay humbly offered towards proving the Purity, Propriety, and true Eloquence of the Writers of the new Teſtament. By A. Blackwell, M. A. Lond. 1737, 2 vol.

A Paraphraſe on the four Evangeliſts, by Sam. Clarke, D. D. Lond. 1758, 10th Ed. 2 vol. Though this paraphraſe is included in Dr. Clarke's

Clarke's works in folio; yet I have mentioned it here, as it may be eaſily procured, and is very uſeful.

A Paraphraſe and Notes on the Acts of the Apoſtles, and upon all the Epiſtles of the new Teſtament. Being a complete Supplement to Dr. Clarke's Paraphraſe on the four Goſpels. By T. Pyle, M. A. Lond. 1765, 2 vol. 5th Ed. There is a Paraphraſe and Notes on the Revelation by the ſame author.

Bengelius' Introduction to his Expoſition of the Apocalypſe: with his Preface to that Work, and the greateſt Part of the Concluſion of it, and alſo his marginal Notes on the Text, which are a Summary of the whole Expoſition. Tranſlated from the High Dutch, by J. Robertſon, D. D. Lond. 1757.

Codex Apocryphus novi Teſtamenti collectus, caſtigatus, teſtimoniiſque cenſuris et animadverſionibus illuſtratus a J. Alb. Fabricio. Hamb. 1703, 2 vol.

An hiſtorical Geography of the old and new Teſtament, by Ed. Wells, D. D. Lond. 1721, 4 vol.

Dionyſii Petavii Rationarium Temporum, cui accedit Supplementum quo Hiſtoria ad hoc uſque Tempus continuatur. Lugd. Bat. 1724. 2 vol.

The ſacred and profane Hiſtory of the World connected from the Creation of the World to the Diſſolution of the Aſſyrian Empire, &c. By S. Shuckford, M. A. Lond. 1743, 4 vol. 3d Ed.

The old and new Teſtament connected in the Hiſtory of the Jews and neighbouring Nations, from the Declenſion of the Kingdom of Iſrael and Judah to the Time of Chriſt. By H. Prideaux, D. D. Lond. 1749, 4 vol. 10th Ed.

J. Alph. Turretini Compendium Hiſtoriæ Eccleſiaſticæ a Chriſto Nato ad finem Sec. XVII. Genevæ, 1737. And with the Continuation, by T. Simon. Halæ, 1750.

Pauli Ernelti Jablonſki Inſtitutiones Hiſtoriæ Chriſtianæ. Francofurti ad Viad. 3 vol. 1754-67. The third volume, which contains the hiſtory of the Church from the end of the ſeventeenth to the middle of the preſent century, was compoſed by Profeſſor Stoſch after the death of Jablonſki. An Engliſh tranſlation of this work in one vol. 8vo. would be very ſerviceable.

An Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory from the Birth of Chriſt to the preſent Time. Written originally in French by Mr. Formey. Secretary to the Academy of Sciences at Berlin. To which is added, an Appendix, giving an Account of the People called Methodiſts, by the Tranſlator. Lond. 1766, 2 vol.

An Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, ancient and modern, from the Birth of Chriſt to the Beginning of the preſent Century: in which the Riſe, Progreſs, and Variation of Church Power, are conſidered in their Connexion with the State of Learning and Philoſophy, and the Political Hiſtory of Europe during that Period. By the late learned L. Moſheim, D. D. Tranſlated from the original Latin, and accompanied with Notes and chronological Tables, by Arch. Maclaine, D. D. Lond. 1782, 6 vol. The learned tranſlator mentions the approbation which Dr. Warburton, Biſhop of Glouceſter, gave of this work in the following terms:

"Moſheim's compendium is excellent, the method admirable, in ſhort the only one deſerving the name of an Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory." The three preceding works, however, have great merit, and may be read with much utility. Two other Hiſtories of the Chriſtian Church deſerving of attention have lately appeared; one by Dr. Gregory, in 2 vol. the other by Dr. Prieſtley, in 2 vol. 8vo.

A compendious Hiſtory of the Church, from the Beginning of the World to the preſent Time (1710). Written in French by L. E. Dupin, and tranſlated into Engliſh. Lond. 1713, 4 vol. Echard's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory from the Birth of Chriſt to the Eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity under Conſtantine, in the year 313, is valuable in many reſpects: the third Ed. was publiſhed in 1712, and the firſt in 1702.

Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory from the Commencement of Chriſtianity to the year 1517, when Luther began the Work of Reformation, by T. Jortin, D. D. 1767-73, 4 vol. Dr. Jortin has, in a little compaſs, taken notice of ſo many facts, and animadverted on them with ſo much judgment, that this work will be ever held in deſerved repute; he has inſerted, alſo, into it the ſubſtance of his Diſcourſes on the Nature, Uſe, and Intent, of Prophecy; and on Miracles, which were preached at Boyle's Lecture.

Prælectiones Eccleſiaſticæ triginta novem olim habitæ in facello Collegii Emmanuelis apud Cantabrigienſes a Joan. Richardſon, S. T. B. Lond. 1726. This is a poſthumous work of an author well known by his Vindication of the Canon of the new Teſtament in Anſwer to Toland.

Hiſtoire des Juifs depuis J. Chriſt juſqu'à préſent, pour ſervir de Continuation à l'Hiſtoire de Joſeph. Par M. Baſnage. Nouvelle Ed. augmentée. A la Haye, 1716, 15 vol.

The Apologies of Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix, in Defence of the Chriſtian Religion, with the Commonitory of Vincentius Lirinenſis concerning the primitive Rule of Faith, tranſlated from their Originals: with Notes, for the Advantage chiefly of Engliſh Readers, and a preliminary Diſcourſe upon each Author. Together with a prefatory Diſſertation about the right Uſe of the Fathers. By W. Reeves, M. A. Lond. 1716, 2 vol. The reader will peruſe the notes of this Gentleman with caution, for he declares with much violence, "that he had rather believe no Bible at all, than believe it in the ſenſe of that commentator" Le Clerc.

The genuine Epiſtles of the Apoſtolical Fathers, St. Barnabas, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Martyrdoms of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, written by thoſe who were preſent at their Sufferings. Tranſlated and publiſhed with a large preliminary Diſcourſe relating to the ſeveral Treatiſes here put together. By W. Wake, Lord Biſhop of Lincoln. Lond. 1710, 2d Ed.

Diſſertatio de S. Scripturarum Interpretatione ſecundum Patrum Commentarios. In qua probatur, 1. S. Scripturam eſſe regulam fidei unicam, ex qua de omnibus Articulis fidei creditu neceſſariis ad ſalutem Judicium ferendum eſt. 2. Patres ſive primævos ſive ſubſequentes non eſſe Idoneos S. Scripturæ Interpretes. 3. Non poſſe Controverſias de S. Trinitate motas ex patribus, conciliis, aut traditione vere catholica

catholica definiri. Authore D. Whitby. Lond. 1714. Whitby in the Epilogue to this work very boldly adds,—Extrium primorum seculorum Scriptoribus, haud pauca, in hoc opere, interpretamenta congessimus, ab omni veritatis specie aliena. Ostendant nobis Patrum Patroni *unicam* Scripturæ Pericopen, quæ alias, obscura cum esset, ab iis sit lucem mutuata. But though the authority of Fathers and Councils be of no weight in controversy, the learned will still have recourse to them, as containing the materials of Ecclesiastical History.

The History of the Establishment of Christianity, compiled from Jewish and Heathen Authors only; exhibiting a Proof of the Truth of this Religion. Translated from the French of Professor Bullet, by W. Salisbury, B. D. Lond. 1776. This work is well executed, and may be serviceable to those who have not Lardner's collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies. The reader will find something worth his attention on this subject in a small tract in 4to.—Non Christianorum de Christo Testimonia ex antiquis Monumentis propolita et dijudicata. A Tobia Eckherdo. Quedlinburgi, 1725.

A new and full Method of settling the canonical Authority of the new Testament. By the late Rev. Jer. Jones. Lond. 1726-7, 3 vol.

The History of the Propagation of Christianity and Overthrow of Paganism. Wherein the Christian Religion is confirmed, the Rise and Progress of Heathenish Idolatry is considered, the Overthrow of Paganism and the Spreading of Christianity in the several Ages of the new Testament Church is explained. The present State of Heathens is inquired into, and Methods for their Convertion offered. By Rob. Millar. Edinb. 1723, 2 vol.

Letters on the Prevalence of Christianity before its civil Establishment. With Observations on a late History of the Decline of the Roman Empire. By East Apthorp, M. A. Lond. 1778. The author has enriched this work with many learned remarks, and especially with a catalogue of civil and ecclesiastical historians, which the reader will find to be very useful.

Five Letters concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Translated from the French of M. Le Clerc, 1690.

A Vindication of the divine Authority and Inspiration of the Writings of the old and new Testament, in Answer to the preceding Book. By W. Lowth, B. D. Oxf. 1692.

An Essay on Inspiration, considered chiefly with Respect to the Evangelists. By Gilbert Wakefield, B. A. Lond. 1781.

Defense des Prophéties de la Religion Chrétienne, par le R. P. Baltus, de la Compagnie de Jesus, contre Grotius et M. Simon. A Paris, 1737, 3 vol. Grotius and Father Simon contend, that many of the prophecies cited in the new Testament from the old, have double senses; one proper and literal, which respected the times and persons of the Jewish nation; the other allegorical, which respected the advent and person of Christ. M. Baltus censures this as a Socinian mode of expounding the prophecies, and, by a particular examination of the prophecies quoted by the writers of the new Testament, shews that they primarily respected Christ, and were literally accomplished in him.

The Uſe and Intent of Prophecy in the ſeveral Ages of the World. In ſix Diſcourſes, delivered at the Temple Church. To which are added ſeveral Diſſertations. By Thomas Sherlock, D. D. late Maſter of the Temple, now Lord Biſhop of London. Lond. 1749, 5th Ed. Theſe diſcourſes were attacked by Dr. Middleton in 1750, and have been defended by Dr. Rutherforth, Mr. Rotherham, and others.

A Defence of Chriſtianity from the Prophecies of the old Teſtament; wherein are conſidered all the Objections againſt this Kind of Proof advanced in the late Diſcourſe on the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion. By Ed. Chandler, Lord Biſhop of Coventry and Lichfield. Lond. 1725, 2d Ed.

A Vindication of the Chriſtian Religion, in two Parts. 1. A Diſcourſe of the Nature and Uſe of Miracles. 2. An Anſwer to a late Book, intitled, A Diſcourſe on the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion. By Samuel Chandler. Lond. 1725. Collins' Diſcourſe on the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion, publiſhed in 1724, was anſwered not only by the three authors laſt mentioned, but by a variety of others: there is an account of the chief of them in Leland's View of the Deiſtical Writers, and in Fabricius' Lux Evangelica, where above 50 different publications in oppoſition to Collins are enumerated. In the ſame authors (Leland and Fabricius) the reader will find a liſt of thoſe who anſwered Woolſton's Objections to the Miracles of our Saviour.

An Eſſay upon the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion; wherein its real Foundation upon the *Old Teſtament* is ſhewn. Occaſioned by the Diſcourſe of the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion. By A. A. Sykes, M. A. Lond. 1725. M. De la Roche, in his Memoirs of Literature, ſpeaking of this work, ſays,—If this book does not appear ſufficient to remove ſcruples about the quotations of the firſt preachers of the Goſpel from the old Teſtament, I know not what will do it.—Mr. Sykes expreſſes himſelf very firmly againſt a double completion of any prophecy; a double completion, ſays he, unleſs it be declared by the prophet, will make all prophecy perfectly uſeleſs.

An Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies concerning the Chriſtian Church; and in particular concerning the Church of Papal Rome: in twelve Sermons, preached in Lincoln's Inn Chapel, at the Lecture of the Right Reverend W. Warburton, Lord Biſhop of Glouceſter. By R. Hurd, D. D. Lond. 1772.

Twelve Sermons on the Prophecies concerning the Chriſtian Church; and in particular concerning the Church of Papal Rome. Preached at Bp. Warburton's Lecture, by S. Hallifax, D. D. Lond. 1776.

Twelve Diſcourſes on the Prophecies concerning the Eſtabliſhment and ſubſequent Hiſtory of Chriſtianity. Preached at Bp. Warburton's Lecture, by Lewis Bagot, LL.D. Oxford, 1780.

An Eſſay towards reconciling the Numbers of Daniel and St. John, determining the Birth of our Saviour, and fixing a preciſe Time for the Continuance of the preſent Deſolation of the Jews; with ſome Conjectures and Calculations pointing the Year 1764 to have been one of the moſt remarkable in Hiſtory. By the Rev. G. Burton, M. A. Lond. 1766.

The

The Reaſonableneſs and Certainty of the Chriſtian Religion, containing Diſcourſes upon ſuch Subjects as are thought moſt liable to Objections. By Rob. Jenkins, D. D. Lond. 1734, 5th Ed. 2 vol.

A Conference with a Theiſt; containing an Anſwer to all the moſt uſual Objections of the Infidels againſt the Chriſtian Religion. By W. Nichols, D. D. Lond. 1723, 3d Ed. 2 vol.

Diſcourſes concerning the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, by J. Jortin. Lond. 1746. The ſubjects of theſe Diſcourſes are, 1. The Prejudices of the Jews and Gentiles. 2. The Propagation of the Goſpel. 3. The Kingdom of Chriſt. 4. The Fitneſs of the Time when Chriſt came into the World. 5. The Teſtimony of John the Baptiſt. 6. The Scriptures of the new Teſtament. 7. The Goſpel as it is Grace and Truth. A third Ed. has been publiſhed.

An Argument in Defence of Chriſtianity, taken from the Confeſſion of its moſt ancient Adverſaries. By Greg. Sharpe, LL.D. Lond. 1755.

A ſecond Argument in Defence of Chriſtianity, taken from the ancient Prophecies, applied to the moſt remarkable Events in the Life and Character of Jeſus Chriſt. By Greg. Sharpe, LL. D. Lond. 1762.

The Evidence of Chriſtianity deduced from Facts and the Teſtimony of Senſe, throughout all Ages of the World to the preſent Time, in a Series of Diſcourſes preached at Boyle's Lecture in 1766-7-8, wherein is ſhewn, that upon the Whole this is not a decaying, but a growing Evidence. By W. Worthington, D.D. Lond. 1769, 2 vol.

Religionis Naturalis et Revelatæ Principia, Methodo Scholaſtica digeſta in uſum Juventutis Academicæ. Pariſiis, 1754, 2 vol. and a third vol. by Way of Supplement. Authore L. T. Hooke. The author of this book is a Doctor of the Sorbonne; yet there are many things very liberally ſaid in it, as the reader may judge from the following propoſition which is maintained in the Supplement,—Deus *ſolus* ob ſapientiſſimos fines cauſarum naturalium ordinem, per ſeipſum aut Miniſterium Angelorum intervertit: Dæmonum quæcunque *naturalis* vis ſit, nulla eſt *fraudis*; ac ubi ſe noſtris rebus immiſcent, divinorum judiciorum Miniſtri, non ſuo arbitrio unquam relinquuntur, neque unquam per eorum miniſterium in confirmationem falſi Miracula eduntur.

The Uſefulneſs, Truths, and Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, defended againſt the Ojections contained in a late Book, intitled, Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, &c. By James Foſter. Lond. 1734, 3d Ed.

The Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion as delivered in the Scriptures. By G. Benſon, D.D. Lond. 1759. 3d Ed. 2 vol. The author not only advances many arguments in proof of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, but obviates, in a familiar way, the chief objections of the Anti-revelationiſts.

A Diſcourſe concerning the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, in three Parts. Wherein, 1. The Conſequences of the Doctrine are ſtated hypothetically. 2. The Nature and Obligation of moral Evidence is explained. 3. The Proofs of the Fact of our Saviour's Reſurrection are propoſed, examined, and fairly demonſtrated to be concluſive. Together with an Appendix concerning the impoſſible Production of Thought from Matter and Motion, &c. By Humph. Ditton. Lond. 1740, 5th Ed.

This book was tranſlated into French in 1728, and the year after into Dutch.

A Defence of Chriſtianity, in two Parts. 1. The Law of Nature conſidered, and ſhewn to be conſiſtent with Reaſon and itſelf,—and the Attention to it productive of the greateſt Benefit to Mankind. 2. The Authority and Uſefulneſs of Revelation and the ſacred Writings aſſerted and vindicated, againſt the ſeveral Objections made to them by the Deiſts in general, and in particular by the Author of Chriſtianity as old as the Creation. By John Leland, D. D. Lond. 1753, 2d Ed. 2 vol.

A View of the principal deiſtical Writers that have appeared in England in the laſt and preſent Century; with Obſervations upon them, and ſome Account of the Anſwers that have been publiſhed againſt them. In ſeveral Letters to a Friend. By J. Leland, D. D. Lond. 1766, 2 vol. 5th Ed.

An Enquiry into the divine Miſſions of John the Baptiſt and Jeſus Chriſt, ſo far as they can be proved from the Circumſtances of their Birth, and their Connection with each other. By W. Bell, M. A. Lond. 1761. There is publiſhed by the ſame Author, A Defence of Revelation in general and the Goſpel in particular.

Letters from Baron Haller to his Daughter, on the Truths of the Chriſtian Religion. Tranſlated from the German. Lond. 1780.

Diſſertations on Subjects relative to the Genius and Evidences of Chriſtianity. By Alex. Gerard, D. D. Edinb. 1766.

An Inquiry into the Cauſes of the Infidelity and Scepticiſm of the Times, with occaſional Obſervations on the Writings of Herbert, Shafteſbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Toulmin, &c. &c. By J. Ogilvie, D. D. Lond. 1783.

Philoſophical Inquiries concerning Chriſtianity. By C. Bonnet of Geneva. Lond. 1787. The great abilities of M. Bonnet are known throughout Europe; the teſtimony of ſuch a diſtinguiſhed Layman, to the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, cannot but have weight with the moſt unthinking.

Letters to a Philoſophical Unbeliever, by Joſ. Prieſtley. Lond. 1780-2.

An Appeal to common Senſe in behalf of Religion. By the Rev. James Oſwald, D. D. Lond. 1768, 2d Ed. A ſecond vol. in 1772.

The Advantages and Neceſſity of the Chriſtian Revelation ſhewn from the State of Religion in the ancient Heathen World: eſpecially with Reſpect to the Knowledge and Worſhip of the one true God: a Rule of moral Duty: and a State of future Rewards and Puniſhments. To which is prefixed, a preliminary Diſcourſe on natural and revealed Religion. By John Leland, D. D. Lond. 1768, 2 vol. All the works of Dr. Leland are valuable.

A Diſcourſe of the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, by Reaſon of the Corruptions of natural Religion among the Jews and Heathens. By Dan. Whitby, D. D. Lond. 1705.

The Light of Nature purſued by Edw. Search (Abraham Tucker) Eſq; Lond. 1768-78, 9 vol. In the laſt four volumes there is added to the general title,—Lights of Nature and Goſpel blended.

Of the Principles and Duties of natural Religion. By the Right Rev. John Wilkins, D. D. Lord Biſhop of Cheſter. Lond. 1734.

The

The Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the Conſtitution and Courſe of Nature. By Joſ. Butler, D. D. late Lord Biſhop of Durham. Lond. 1754, 5th Ed. An Edition by Biſhop Halliſax in 1788.

The Religion of Nature delineated. By Mr. Wollaſton. Lond. 1750, 7th Ed.

Conſiderations on the Theory of Religion: in three Parts. 1. Want of Univerſality in natural and revealed Religion, no juſt Objection againſt either. 2. The Scheme of divine Providence with Regard to the Time and Manner of the ſeveral Diſpenſations of revealed Religion, more eſpecially the Chriſtian. 3. The Progreſs of natural Religion and Science, or the continual Improvement of the World in general. To which are added, two Diſcourſes; the former on the Life and Character of Chriſt, the latter on the Benefits procured by his Death, in regard to our Mortality. With an Appendix, concerning the Uſe of the word Soul in holy Scripture; and the State of the Dead there deſcribed. By Edw. Lord Biſhop of Carliſle. Carliſle, 1784, Ed. 7th.

An Eſſay on Miracles, in two Diſcourſes. By Will. (Biſhop) Fleetwood. Lond. 1701. The two main Principles of this Book,—that none but God can work a *true* Miracle,—and that it cannot be ſuppoſed that a true miracle was ever wrought in oppoſition to a doctrine eſtabliſhed on true miracles,—were oppoſed by Mr. (Biſhop) Hoadley, in a Letter to Mr. Fleetwood. Lond. 1702. And the reading theſe two tracts occaſioned Mr. Locke's writing his diſcourſe on Miracles, which he publiſhed in his works.

Traité ſur les Miracles. Dans lequel on prouve que le Diable n'en ſauroit faire pour confirmer l'erreur; où l'on fait voir, par pluſieurs exemples tirés de l'Hiſtoire ſainte et profane, que ceux qu'on lui attribue ne ſont qu'un effet de l'impoſture ou de l'addreſſe des hommes. Et où l'on examine le Syſtême oppoſé tel que l'a établi le Dr. Clarke dans ſon Traité ſur la Religion Naturelle et Chretienne. Par J. Serces, Vicaire d'Appleby dans le Comté de Lincoln. A Amſter. 1729. The author ſays in his preface, that in maintaining that God never permitted the devil to work miracles in ſupport of any dangerous error, and in queſtioning the phyſical power of the devil to effect a miracle, he declared war againſt the opinion of the moſt venerable theologians and philoſophers ancient and modern. The book is well written, and I do not know that it has ever appeared in Engliſh.

A Diſſertation on Miracles, deſigned to ſhew that they are Arguments of a divine Interpoſition, and abſolute Proofs of the Miſſion and Doctrine of a Prophet. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1771. The doctrine advanced in the preceding book, is very ably ſupported in this. The reader will find in *Werenfelſius'* works the queſtion,—Num Miracula *certa* ſint Veritatis ſigna—determined, by various arguments, in the affirmative. The author, Mr. Farmer, was accuſed of having borrowed his Idea of Miracles from Mr. Le Moine's book on that ſubject; and he publiſhed a pamphlet, intitled, An Examination of Mr. Le Moine's Treatiſe on Miracles, in which he ſhews the difference of his plan from thoſe of Mr. Le Moine, Dr. Sykes, and Bp. Fleetwood.

A brief Diſcourſe concerning the Credibility of Miracles and Revelation. Wherein the Credibility of Goſpel Miracles is ſhewn, notwithſtanding all later Miracles may be rejected as fictitious. To which is added, a Poſtſcript in Anſwer to the Lord Biſhop of Litchfield's Charge

to

to his Clergy. By A. A. Sykes, D. D. Lond. 1742, and a second Ed. in 1749.

Two Queſtions, previous to Dr. Middleton's Free Inquiry impartially conſidered: viz. What are the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, *in general*, is founded? And, Upon what Grounds the Miracles of the Goſpel, *in particular*, are credible? To which is added, a Diſſertation upon Mark xvi. 17-18. *Theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe*, &c. Lond. 1750, and a ſecond Part in 1752, by Dr. Sykes. This author wrote above ſixty different tracts: an edition of all his works would be uſeful.

The Criterion: or Miracles examined with a View to expoſe the Pretenſions of Pagans and Papiſts, to compare the miraculous Powers recorded in the new Teſtament, with thoſe ſaid to ſubſiſt in later Times, &c. By the Rev. J. Douglas, A. M. Lond. 1757.

A Diſſertation on Miracles: containing an Examination of the Principles advanced by David Hume, Eſq. By G. Campbell, D. D. Edinb. 1762.

An Inquiry into the Nature and Deſign of Chriſt's Temptation in the Wilderneſs. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1776, 3d Ed.

An Eſſay on the Demoniacs of the new Teſtament. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1755.

An impartial Inquiry into the Caſe of the Goſpel Demoniacs. By W. Worthington, D. D. Lond. 1777.

Letters to the Rev. Dr. Worthington, in Anſwer to his late Publication, intitled, "An impartial Inquiry into the Caſe of the Goſpel Demoniacs." By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1778.

An Inquiry into the Heathen and the Scripture Doctrine of Dæmons. In which the Hypotheſis of the Rev. Mr. Farmer and others on this Subject, is particularly examined. By John Fell. Lond. 1779.

An Enquiry into the meaning of the Demoniacs in the new Teſtament. By T. P. &c. Dr. Sykes. Lond. 1737. And a further Enquiry, &c. by the ſame author in the ſame year.

The Caſe of the Demoniacs mentioned in the new Teſtament. By N. Lardner, D. D. Lond. 1758.

The general Prevalence of the Worſhip of human Spirits in the ancient Heathen Nations aſſerted and proved. By Hugh Farmer. Lond. 1783.

An Hiſtorical Diſſertation on idolatrous Corruptions in Religion, from the Beginning of the World; and on the Methods taken by divine Providence in reforming them. By Arthur Young. Lond. 1734, 2 vol. The object of this author is to ſhew, that Revelation was deſigned to prevent Superſtition; he has many ſenſible Obſervations on particular parts of the Law of Moſes.

Pauli Ern. Jabloniki Pantheon Ægyptiorum, ſive de Diis eorum Commentarius. Francofurti ad Viadrum, 1750, 3 vol.

Archæologiæ Philoſophicæ: ſive Doctrina antiqua de Rerum originibus. Lond. 1733. Auctore Thoma Burnet, S. T. P.

Origines Gentium Antiquiſſimæ. By R. Cumberland. D. D. late Lord Biſhop of Peterborough. Lond. 1724.

De Fide et Officiis Chriſtianorum. Liber poſthumus. Lond. 1728, Ed. 2da. Autore T. Burnetio, S. T. P. All the Latin works of Dr. Burnet are written with ſuch perſpicuity and elegance of ſtyle, that, notwithſtanding

withſtanding the ſingularity of ſome of his opinions, they are highly deſerving of attention.

Eight Sermons, preached at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in Defence of the Divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. By Dan. Waterland, D. D. Lond. 1720, 2d Ed. This and the other theological works of Dr. Waterland, are much eſteemed by the orthodox, and they may be properly conſulted by ſuch Arians and Socinians as wiſh to know what can be advanced againſt their principles.

Traité de la Divinité de notre Seigneur Jeſus Chriſt, par. M. Abbadie. A Rotterdam, 1709. This author publiſhed a treatiſe on the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion at Rotter. 1689, 2 vol.

The Works of Mr. Tho. Emlyn, containing a Collection of Tracts and Sermons on various Subjects. With a large Account of the Author's Life, by Solom. Emlyn, Eſq. Lond. 1746.

An Eſſay on Spirit; wherein the Doctrine of the Trinity is conſidered in the Light of Nature and Reaſon, as well as in the Light in which it was held by the ancient Hebrews, compared alſo with the Doctrine of the old and new Teſtament. With an Inquiry into the Sentiments of the primitive Fathers of the Church, &c. Lond. 1751, from the Dublin Copy, with Additions and Corrections by the Author (Bp. Clayton). This work was animadverted on by Dr. Scott in his Scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity, 1754, and anſwered by Mr. Jones, 1770.

The Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai to his Friends for embracing Chriſtianity, in ſeven Letters to Eliſha Levi, Merchant of Amſterdam, together with an eighth Letter, on the Generation of Jeſus Chriſt, with Notes and Illuſtrations. The 2d Ed. with Alterations and Additions. By Henry Taylor, Rector of Crawley and Vicar of Portſmouth, in Hants. Lond. 1784, 2 vol. Theſe Letters were printed at various times, from 1771 to 1777, in 4to; they are compoſed with great learning and ingenuity, and contain the moſt formidable attack on, what is called, the Athanaſian Syſtem that is any where to be met with.

A Letter writ in the year 1730, concerning the Queſtion, Whether the Logos ſupplied the Place of a human Soul in the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt? To which are added, two Poſtſcripts; the firſt containing an Explication of theſe Words, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, as uſed in the Scriptures. The ſecond containing Remarks upon the third Part of the late Biſhop of Clogher's Vindication of the Hiſtories of the old and new Teſtament. Lond. 1759. By Dr. Lardner. A complete edition of Dr. Lardner's works, in 11 vol. 8vo. with the Author's Life, by Dr. Kippis, was publiſhed in 1788.—*Newton* and *Locke* were eſteemed *Socinians*, *Lardner* was an avowed one: *Clarke* and *Whiſton* were declared *Arians*; *Bull* and *Waterland* were profeſſed *Athanaſians*: who will take upon him to ſay that theſe men were not equal to each other in probity and ſcriptural knowledge? And if that be admitted, ſurely we ought to learn no other leſſon, from the diverſity of their opinions, except that of perfect moderation and good-will towards all thoſe who happen to differ from ourſelves. We ought to entertain no other wiſh, but that every man may be allowed, without loſs of fame or fortune, *et ſentire quæ velit, et quæ*

sentiat dicere. This absolute freedom of inquiry, it is apprehended, is the best way of investigating the sense of Scripture, the most probable mean of producing an uniformity of opinion, and of rendering the Gospel Dispensation as intelligible to us in the eighteenth century as we presume it was to the Christians in the first.

The true Doctrine of the new Testament concerning Jesus Christ considered; wherein the Misrepresentations that have been made of it upon the *Arian* Hypothesis and upon all *Trinitarian* and *Athanasian* Principles are exposed; and the Honour of our Saviour's divine Character and Mission is maintained. With an Appendix, containing Strictures upon the first Chapter of St. John's Gospel; and a prefatory Discourse upon the Right of private Judgment in Matters of Religion. This work was revised, before it was printed, by Dr. Lardner; the author (the Rev. Mr. Cardale) published a Supplement to it, intitled, A Comment on some Passages in Christ's Prayer at the Close of his public Ministry.

The Apology of Theophilus Lindsey, M. A. on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, in Yorkshire. Lond. 1774.

A Scriptural Confutation of the Arguments against the One Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, produced by the Rev. Mr. Lindsey in his late Apology. By a Layman. York, 1779, 3d Ed.

A Sequel to the Apology on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire. By Theo. Lindsey, M. A. Lond. 1776.

An Inquiry into the Belief of the Christians of the three first Centuries, respecting the One Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Being a Sequel to a Scriptural Confutation of the Rev. Mr. Lindsey's late Apology. By W. Burgh, Esq. York, 1778. Mr. Lindsey's principles were opposed, not only by Mr. Burgh, but by Mr. Bingham in his Vindication of the Doctrine and Liturgy of the Church of England; by Dr. Randolph in his Vindication of the Worship of the Son and Holy Ghost; and in his Letter to the Remarker (Mr. Temple) on the Layman's Scriptural Confutation, and by others.

Two Dissertations; 1. On the Preface to St. John's Gospel: 2. On praying to Jesus Christ. By Theop Lindsey, A. M. With a short Postscript, by Dr. Jebb. Lond. 1779.

An Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship, from the Reformation to our own Times. With some Account of the Obstructions which it has met with at different Periods. By Theo. Lindsey, M. A. Lond. 1783. The author has treated this interesting subject with great candour and ability, and has made additional Remarks in a Tract published by him in 1788, intitled, Vindiciæ Priestleianæ.

An Enquiry into the Opinions of the Christian Writers of the three first Centuries concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. By Gilbert Wakefield, B. A. Lond. 1784, vol. 1st.

An History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ, compiled from original Writers; proving that the Christian Church was at first Unitarian. By Jos. Priestley, LL. D. 4 vol. 1786.

Five Dissertations: 1. On the Athanasian Doctrine. 2. On the Socinian Scheme. 3. On the Person of Christ. 4. On the Rise, Progress, Perfection, and End of Christ's Kingdom. 5. On the Causes

which

which probably conſpired to produce our Saviour's Agony. By Ed. Harwood, D. D. Lond. 1772. And a 2d Ed. of the Eſſay on the Socinian Scheme, in 1784. Dr. Harwood rejects the Athanaſian and Socinian Schemes as not, in his opinion, founded in Scripture.

Tractatus de Imputatione divina Peccati Adami in reatum. Authore Dan. Whitby, S. T. P. Lond. 1711.

The Scripture Doctrine of original Sin propoſed to free and candid Examination. To which is added a Supplement containing ſome Remarks on two Books, viz. The Vindication of the Scripture Doctrine of original Sin, and, The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind. By John Taylor, of Norwich, D. D. 3d Ed. 1750.

A Diſcourſe concerning, 1. The true Purport of the Words *Election* and *Reprobation*, and the Things ſignified by them in the holy Scripture. 2. The Extent of Chriſt's Redemption. 3. The Grace of God, where it is enquired whether it be vouchſafed ſufficiently to thoſe who improve it not, and irreſiſtibly to thoſe who do improve it; and whether Men be wholly paſſive in the Work of Regeneration. 4. The Liberty of the Will in a State of Trial and Probation. 5. The Perſeverance and Defectibility of the Saints; with ſome Reflexions on the State of Heathens, the Providence, and Præſcience of God. By Dan. Whitby, D. D. Lond. 1710. Whitby ſays of himſelf in the preface to this work, that he was brought up a *Calviniſt*, and that what firſt moved him to examine into the truth of the Calviniſtic Divinity, was—*the Imputation of Adam's Sin to all his Poſterity*,—and the ſtrange conſequences of it. He ſays, that he examined the writings of antiquity, and finiſhed a treatiſe on Original Sin in Latin, which had been compoſed about twenty years, but which he had not thought it adviſable to publiſh. This treatiſe was publiſhed in the following year.

The divine Feudal Law, or Covenants with Mankind repreſented, together with Means for uniting of Proteſtants. By Sam. Baron Puffendorff. Tranſlated from the Latin by Theop. Dorrington. Lond. 1703. In this book Puffendorf treats of many of the ſubjects which are diſcuſſed by Whitby in the laſt article. A tract, intitled, The Re-union of Chriſtians, or the Means to re-unite Chriſtians under one Confeſſion of Faith, was publiſhed in London, 1673. It was originally written in French, and in an appendix to another tranſlation of it in 1700, we learn that M. D'Huiſſeau, one of the Miniſters of Saumur, had a principal hand in its compoſition.

The Doctrine of irreſiſtible Grace proved to have no Foundation in the Writings of the new Teſtament. By T. Edwards, A. M. Camb. 1759.

An Attempt to aſcertain and illuſtrate the Authority, Nature and Deſign of the Inſtitution of Chriſt, commonly called the Communion and the Lord's Supper. By W. Bell, D. D. Lond. 1780.

A plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptiſm, in which all the Texts of the N. T. relating to it are produced, and the whole Doctrine concerning it drawn from them alone, in a Courſe of Letters to the Right Rev. Dr. Benjamin Hoadley, late Lord Biſhop of Winchester, Author of a plain Account of the Lord's Supper. Lond. 1766, 2d Ed.

The Hiſtory of Infant-Baptiſm. By W. Wall. Lond. 1720. The firſt Ed. in 4to. in 1705.

Reflexions

Reflexions on Mr. Wall's Hiſtory of Infant-Baptiſm. By J. Gale. Lond. 1711. Wall's main argument in favour of Infant-Baptiſm is founded on the practice which the Jews, he ſays, had of baptizing proſelytes to their religion: Dr. Gill has queſtioned, in a learned tract, the Exiſtence of ſuch a practice amongſt the Jews; and others have endeavoured to ſhew, that, admitting the practice to have exiſted, it was not extended to children who were born after their parents had become proſelytes; and conſequently that the neceſſity of baptizing children born of Chriſtian parents cannot be inferred from the Jewiſh practice of baptizing proſelytes. Socinus wrote a tract on this queſtion, An homini Chriſtiano aquæ baptiſmo carere liceat? and he determined it in the affirmative.

The Scripture Doctrine of Atonement examined; firſt in Relation to Jewiſh Sacrifices; and then to the Sacrifice of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. By John Taylor, D. D. 1751. A ſmall pamphlet was publiſhed in 1772, by W. Graham, A. M. intitled the Doctrine of Atonement briefly conſidered, in a Series of Letters to a young Gentleman at the Univerſity. To which is added, Dr. Duchal's Letter to Dr. Taylor on the ſame Subject; which was firſt publiſhed in the 2d vol. of the Theological Repoſitory. Before the publication of Dr. Taylor's Doctrine of Atonement, a very ſenſible Eſſay on Redemption had been publiſhed by Mr. Balguy, 1741; a 2d Ed. of it in 1785.

Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator between God and Man, an Advocate for us with the Father, and a Propitiation for the Sins of the World. 2d Ed. To which is now added by another Gentleman, an Eſſay to prove the Credibility of the Goſpel from the Doctrine of the Efficacy of Chriſt's Death for the Redemption of the World. Lond. 1761. This is a very ſenſible treatiſe (by Mr. Tomkins), in which the author endeavours to eſtabliſh the literal ſenſe of thoſe paſſages in Scripture which concern our redemption by Chriſt: he looks upon the death of Chriſt as a real ſacrifice, and repreſents the notion the Scripture gives us of theſe things as conſiſtent with the dictates of Reaſon and natural Religion.

An Eſſay on the Scheme and Conduct, Procedure and Extent of Man's Redemption; wherein is ſhewn, from the holy Scriptures, that this great work is to be accompliſhed by a gradual Reſtauration of Man and Nature to their primitive State. To which is annexed, a Diſſertation on the Deſign and Argumentation of the Book of Job. By W. Worthington, A. M. Lond. 1748, 2d Ed.

An Eſſay on the Nature, Deſign, and Origin of Sacrifices. By Dr. Sykes. Lond. 1748.

The Scripture Doctrine of the Redemption of Man by Jeſus Chriſt. In two parts. In the *former* of which, the principal, if not all, the Texts relating to the Subject are produced, and the Meaning of each Text, where neceſſary, is examined and explained. In the *latter*, the Doctrine of our Redemption is ſet forth in 48 Propoſitions. By Dr. Sykes. 1756. This is one of the laſt and one of the beſt works of Dr. Sykes, who died in Nov. 1756.

De Statu mortuorum et reſurgentium Tractatus. Adjicitur Appendix de futura Judæorum Reſtauratione. Lond. 1733, Ed. 2da, Autore T. Burnetio, S. T. P.

An

An hiſtorical View of the Controverſy concerning an intermediate State and the ſeparate Exiſtence of the Soul, between Death and the general Reſurrection; deduced from the beginning of the Proteſtant Reformation to the preſent Times. With ſome Thoughts in a prefatory Diſcourſe, on the Uſe and Importance of Theological Controverſy. Lond. 1772, 2d Ed.

The Reſtoration of all Things, or a Vindication of the Goodneſs and Grace of God to be manifeſted at laſt in the Recovery of his whole Creation out of their Fall. By Jeremy White. Lond. 1712. The author gives ſome account, in his preface, of thoſe who in ancient and modern times had ſupported the opinion of the final reformation of all mankind. Dr. Hartley maintained the ſame doctrine in the ſecond volume of his Obſervations on Man, &c. and Biſhop Newton has ſhewn himſelf an able advocate for it in one of his Diſſertations publiſhed in his works.

The Myſtery hid from Ages and Generations, made manifeſt by the Goſpel Revelation: or the Salvation of all Men, the grand Thing aimed at in the Scheme of God, as opened in the new Teſtament Writings, and entruſted with Jeſus Chriſt to bring into Effect. Lond. 1784. By Charles Chauncy, D. D. of Boſton, in New England. This author has publiſhed two other tracts deſerving of attention; viz. Five Diſſertations on the Fall, 1785, and the Benevolence of the Deity conſidered. Boſton, 1784.

An Enquiry into the Nature of the human Soul; wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is evinced from the Principles of Reaſon and Philoſophy. Lond. 1745, 2 vol. 3d Ed. Mr. Baxter publiſhed an Appendix to the firſt part of this Enquiry in 1750.

Sermons on the Evidence of a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, ariſing from a View of our Nature and Condition; in which are conſidered ſome Objections of Hume. By W. Craven, B. D. Camb. 1783. The ſubject is treated with great perſpicuity, and Mr. Hume's objections ſolidly refuted.

Diſquiſitions relating to Matter and Spirit. To which is added, the Hiſtory of the philoſophical Doctrine concerning the Origin of the Soul and the Nature of Matter; with its Influence on Chriſtianity, eſpecially with reſpect to the Pre-exiſtence of Chriſt. By Joſ. Prieſtley, LL.D. F. R. S. Lond. 1777.

A free Diſcuſſion of the Doctrines of Materialiſm and philoſophical Neceſſity, in a Correſpondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Prieſtley: to which are added by Dr. Prieſtley, an Introduction explaining the Nature of the Controverſy, and Letters to ſeveral Writers who have animadverted on his Diſquiſitions. Lond. 1778. The reader who has a taſte for theſe metaphyſical diſquiſitions, may conſult ſome more recent publications on the ſubject, eſpecially an Eſſay on the Nature and Exiſtence of the material World. Lond. 1781.

The Theological Repoſitory, conſiſting of original Eſſays, Hints, Queries, &c. calculated to promote religious Knowledge. Lond. 1773, 3 vol.

Theſaurus Theologicus, or a complete Syſtem of Divinity, ſummed up in brief Notes upon ſelect Places of the old and new Teſtament. By W. Beveridge, D. D. Lord Biſhop of St. Aſaph. Lond. 1711, 4 vol.

A Syſtem of Divinity and Morality, in a Series of Diſcourſes on all the eſſential Points of natural and revealed Religion, compiled from the works

works of above thirty eminent Divines. Reviſed and corrected by Ferd. Warner, LL. D. Lond. 1767, 4 vol.

Joan. Chriſ. Beckii Synopſis Inſtitutionum Univerſæ Theologiæ Naturalis et Revelatæ, &c. in uſum Auditorii Domeſtici. Baſiliæ, 1765. This is a very good work; the author expreſſes himſelf in the following terms concerning the mode of education which prevails in this place, and I believe in Oxford.—Multis placet *Anglorum* diſcendi ratio, quorum ſinguli juvenes, cum ad Academias ſeſe conferunt, unum ex publicis doctoribus ſibi ducem ſtudiorum eligunt, cujus ſequentes conſilium legant, meditentur, ſcribant. Identidem examinantur, ut de progreſſibus judicari queat et conſilia ulteriora ſuppeditari. Habet hæc methodus ſua commoda. Sed incommodum iſtud eſt maximum, quod ſinguli doctores nonniſi paucis hoc modo dirigendis ſufficiant, niſi ab omnibus aliis laboribus immunes ſint, quod apud nos minime obtinetur.—Our mode of academic inſtitution is ſtill more perfect than this author conceived it to be; and our Tutors have that freedom from other engagements which he wiſhed for.

Joan. Fred. Burgii Inſtitutiones Theologicæ. Vratiſlaviæ, 1766, Ed. 3tia.

Sermons on the Attributes of God. By Dan. Whitby, D. D. Lond. 1710, 2 vol.

Diſcourſes concerning the Being and natural Perfections of God. By T. Abernethy, M. A. Dublin, 1746, 2 vol.

The Being and Attributes of God demonſtrated. By H. Knight, A. M. Lond. 1747. It is enough to ſay of this work, that it is recommended by Benſon, Lardner, and Taylor of Norwich.

A practical Catechiſm. By H. Hammond, D. D. The 12th Ed. whereunto is added, the Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, by the ſame Author. Lond. 1683.

Lectures on the Catechiſm of the Church of England. By W. Gilpin, M. A. Lond. 1781, 2d Ed. This book greatly merits the attention of young Perſons. Archbiſhop Wake's Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, in a Commentary on the Church Catechiſm; Archbiſhop Secker's Lectures on the Catechiſm; Oſtervald's Grounds and Principles of the Chriſtian Religion; Bp. Gaſtrel's Chriſtian Inſtitutes; Bp. Gibſon's Paſtoral Letters, and a great variety of other religious Tracts, are highly deſerving of notice: but I omit an enumeration of them; heartily recommending it to the reader, whether he be a Layman or Clergyman, to furniſh himſelf with the collection of ſuch tracts which is made by the Society for promoting Chriſtian Knowledge.

An Eſſay on the Compoſition of a Sermon, tranſlated from the Original of the Rev. J. Claude, Miniſter of the French reformed Church at Charenton. With Notes by Rob. Robinſon, in 2 vol. Camb. 1779.

Sermons on ſeveral Occaſions, preached before the Univerſity of Cambridge; to which is prefixed, a Diſſertation on that Species of Compoſition. By J. Mainwaring, B. D. Camb. 1780. The ſtudious reader will receive much advantage from the juſtneſs of the criticiſm diſplayed in the Diſſertation and Notes.

A Diſcourſe of the Paſtoral Care, by Gilbert Burnet, Lord Biſhop of Sarum; with a new Preface and ſome other Additions. Firſt printed in 1692. Glaſgow, 1762.

Lectures

Lectures on the Exercise of the sacred Ministry. By the late T. F. Ostervald. Translated from the French, with a Preface and occasional Notes, by Tho. Stevens, M. A. Lond. 1781.

The Theological Works of the most Rev. Dr. John Potter, late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury: containing his Sermons, Charges, Discourses of Church Government, and Prælectiones Theologicæ. Oxf. 1753, 3 vol.

The Miscellaneous Works of the late reverend and learned Conyers Middleton, D. D. Lond. 1755, 5 vol. 2d Ed.

Opuscula Miscellanea Theologica Joan. Burton, S. T. P. and his Sermons, &c. in all 6 vol. Oxford, 1744-71.

The Works of Tho. Sharp, D. D. late Archdeacon of Northumberland, containing occasional Sermons; Tracts on various Subjects; Considerations on the Rubric and Canons; Dissertations on *Elohim* and *Berith*; a Defence of the Dissertations, in three Parts; Discourses touching the Antiquity of the Hebrew Tongue and Character; an Examination of Mr. Hutchinson's Exposition of Cherubim. Lond. 1763, 6 vol.

Four Dissertations. 1. On Providence. 2. On Prayer. 3. On the Reasons for expecting that virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a State of Happiness. 4. On the Importance of Christianity, the Nature of Historical Evidence and Miracles. By R. Price, F. R. S. Lond. 1767.

Discourses on various Subjects, by W. S. Powell, D. D. Lond. 1776. The editor, Dr. Balguy, observes that these discourses were chiefly intended for the benefit of the younger students in divinity. They are written with great acuteness and knowledge of the several subjects.

A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. By C. Wheatley. Lond. 1722, 4th Ed. This is one of the most useful works on the subject, as it comprehends the substance of *Comber*'s Companion to the Temple, of *Nichols*'s Commentary on the Common Prayer, and of other similar treatises.

A Vindication of the Government, Doctrine, and Worship of the Church of England, established in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, against the injurious Reflections of Mr. Neale in his late History of the Puritans. Together with a Detection of many false Quotations and Mistakes in that Performance. Lond. 1740. By Bp. Maddox.

An Impartial Examination of the 2d, 3d, and 4th vol. (8vo.) of Daniel Neal's History of the Puritans. By Zach. Grey, LL. D. Lond. 1736-9, 2 vol.

Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England, and the Means of advancing Religion therein. Lond. 1750, 2d Ed.—In 1677, the third Ed. of a book was published, intitled, A Discourse vindicating the Lawfulness of those things which are chiefly excepted against in the Church of England, especially in its Liturgy and Worship, by W. Falkener.

The Book of Common Prayer reformed according to the Plan of the late Dr. Sam. Clarke; together with the Psalter or Psalms of David. Lond. 1774.

provoke one another *unto love and to good works*, and less disposed to backbite and devour one another for our opinions; that Christianity may have its root in our hearts, rather than in our heads; that it may shew forth its fruit in the purity and integrity of our lives, rather than in the vehemence and subtilty of our disputes; in a word, that the time may at length come, when every individual in the Church and out of the Church, Trinitarian and Unitarian, may love his own *heresy* less than gospel *charity*.

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